MOTION PICTURE REVIEWS

WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY CLUB
LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

VOL. XI - 1937

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JANUARY, 1937

For practical use we suggest filing bulletins where they may be easily accessible for reference. Films are not released simultaneously over the country. You will need these reviews for constant reference.

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***Film suitable for family entertainment but not necessarily appropriate for children under 12 or for children unaccompanied by adults.**

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Vol. XI **JANUARY 1937** **No. 1**

FEATURE FILMS

AFTER THE THIN MAN

William Powell, Myrna Loy, James Stewart, Elissa Landi, Joseph Calleia, Jessie Ralph. From the story by Dashiell Hammett. Screen play by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett. Direction by W. S. Van Dyke. M-G-M.

It is a pleasant surprise to find the sequel to "The Thin Man" as good on all counts as the original picture. *Nick Charles,* well known detective, returning with his bride *Nora* to his San Francisco home on New Year's Eve is greeted raucously by his disreputable acquaintances, and coldly by his wife's aristocratic family. While the couple is celebrating the New Year in a night club, a murder is committed involving *Nora's* cousin, and *Nick* is called upon to solve the mystery. The problem is complicated by every device known to the writers of mystery stories. The sinister owner of a night club, his enigmatic Chinese partner and a pretty dancing girl come and go in the midst of San Francisco's noisy celebration. In spite of the many characters and the rapid-fire action, the story is coherent and is brought to a logical conclusion by *Nick's* clever detective work. William Powell and Myrna Loy are their delightful selves and with the dog, *Asta,* keep the audience in roars of laughter. The supporting cast is so perfectly chosen it would be invidious to single out any individual for especial mention. The charming scenes of domesticity between *Nick* and *Nora* and the adventures of *Asta* are intriquingly incongruous against the hard-boiled police blackground, the drinking and the rowdy humor. Expert handling makes the picture at once thrilling and highly amusing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very Sophisticated **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

ARIZONA MAHONEY

Joe Cook, Irving Bacon, Larry Crabbe, June Martel. Direction by James Hogan. Paramount.

Part comedy, part western, and not very good in either category, "Arizona Mahoney" suffers from lack of material. To be sure, love for the heroine persuades a bad man to go straight, but that no longer constitutes news in any cinema. Even the final battle is lukewarm. Children might enjoy Joe Cook and his one-elephant circus; others should be forewarned.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

• • •

AS YOU LIKE IT

Elizabeth Bergner, Laurence Oliver, Henry Ainley, Sophie Stewart, Leon Quartermaine. Play by William Shakespeare. Direction by Paul Czinner. Fox (Interallied).

It is unfortunate that each of Shakespeare's plays on the screen will inevitably be compared with the others, for they are quite different in intent and all are not produced on the same scale. William Allan Neilson in

his book, *The Facts About Shakespeare,* calls *A Midsummer Night's Dream* "graceful poetic fancy and dainty lyricism." In commenting upon *As You Like It,* he says "His (Shakespeare's) power in high comedy . . . reaches its supreme pitch." He calls *As You Like It* "a romantic love tale, laid in some remote holiday world . . . acted out by a group of delightful creations who are endowed with intellect, wit and natural affection, bathed in poetic imagination and yet handled with sufficient naturalism to awaken and hold our human sympathies." Such is *As You Like It* on the screen. Whether or not one approves the choice of Elizabeth Bergner as *Rosalind,* whether one prefers as background real forests or fanciful, synthetic ones are matters of personal taste. Even the rendering of the familiar lines will please some and possibly infuriate others. We leave our readers with the advice to go and judge for themselves.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent **Children, 8 to 12** Little Interest

• • •

BANJO ON MY KNEE

Barbara Stanwick, Joel McCrea, Walter Brennan, Buddy Ebsen, Helen Westley, Walter Catlett, Katherine de Mille. Screen play by Nunnally Johnson. Based on a novel by Harry Hamilton. Direction by John Cromwell. 20th Century-Fox.

A romance of the shanty-boat dwellers along the lower Mississippi combines musical numbers with melodrama in an involved story. The plot is concerned with the troubles of a newly married pair and the hopes of the girl's father (Walter Brennan) for a grandson to carry on the family name. The groom, pursued by police, is obliged to leave his bride at the altar, and the girl goes to New Orleans to earn her living. She obtains a position in a night club, and when her father finds her, the two join in a singing act. Walter Brennan shows unexpected ability with strange musical instruments, as well as his banjo, and contributes many humorous sequences. When the group reassembles at the shanty-boat, a thrilling storm nearly wrecks their frail craft. There are many musical and dance numbers, and the Hall Johnson Choir sings beautifully. The cast is well balanced and the direction is excellent. Although the plot is too incoherent to be convincing, the customs and prejudices of the shanty-boat people form a novel and interesting background for the picture.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature **Children, 8 to 12** No Interest

• • •

BELOVED ENEMY

Merle Oberon, Brian Aherne, Karen Morley, Henry Stephenson. Direction by H. C. Potter. Samuel Goldwyn.

Powerful, moving and tragic is this historical romance in which *Dennis Riordan,* a leader in the Irish rebellion, falls in love with the daughter of an English official. Knowing that their love will bring nothing but unhappiness, each patriotically swears not to meet the other again, but they are unavoidably brought together when *Dennis* goes to England to attend peace negotiations. Though fanatically devoted to his cause, *Dennis* is persuaded to sign a treaty, and, thought by his party to have betrayed them, he is shot when he returns to Ireland. The picture is beautifully acted by a remarkably good cast.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Depressing **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

BLACK LEGION

Humphrey Bogart, Dick Foran, Erin O'Brien Moore, Ann Sheridan, Sam Hinds. Original story by Robert Lord. Direction by Archie L. Mayo. Warner Bros.

In Sinclair Lewis' novel, "It Can't Happen Here," a reaction of genuine alarm is mitigated by the very title. Here, however, we have a record of something that did happen only a few months ago. It is a dark page in the chronicles of the past year, and while the actual details of the picture have been altered so that they fit no particular person or circumstance, the Black Legion is shown here very much as it existed. This is not a pleasant picture, and its influence is debatable. Like many of the G-Men films, the indictment of crime is accompanied by scenes of physical violence and bloodshed to pander to the public taste for sensationalism. It may serve as a warning to those who believe justice can ever be dispensed in America by militaristic methods, whether extra-legal or not; and again those who need the lesson may miss it entirely.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** Terrifying

• • •

BORN TO DANCE

Eleanor Powell, James Stewart, Virginia Bruce, Una Merkel, Sid Silvers, Frances Langford, Raymond Walburn, Alan Dinehart, Buddy Ebsen. Screen play by Jack McGowan and Sid Silvers. Art director, Sedric Gibbons. Direction by Roy Del Ruth. M-G-M.

The plot of this musical comedy uses the familiar situation of the stagestruck heroine trying to get an opportunity to put on her act and succeeding at last through the efforts of her lover and a last minute burst of temper on the part of the premiere danseuse whose place she takes. The story, as in most such performances, is of little importance and merely serves as a frame for a series of scenes in

which the audience receives its full measure of entertainment in the tap dancing of Eleanor Powell and the sparkling songs of the male chorus. Excellent comedy is found in the acting of Una Merkel, and Buddy Ebsen's eccentric dancing is noteworthy. The settings are unusually fine, and the modernistic battleship is an effective background. The episode of the girl who marries her sailor partner in a dance marathon and later fails to recognize him is in questionable taste and falls below the general standard of the production.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Mature

• • •

CAMILLE

Greta Garbo, Robert Taylor, Lionel Barrymore, Elizabeth Allan, Jessie Ralph Henry Daniell, Lenore Ulric, Laura Hope Crews, Rex O'Malley. From the novel by Alexander Dumas, Fils. Screen play by Zoe Akins, Frances Marion and James Hilton. Direction by George Cukor. Art Direction by Cedric Gibbons. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The tragic love story of "La Dame aux Camellias" will never cease to hold audiences enthralled, and this picture is an exquisite production of the immortal classic. The costumes, the sets and Greta Garbo herself are completely beautiful. Instead of the languorous, feverish, worn figure of tradition, Miss Garbo's *Camille* is couriously fresh and clear cut. Lionel Barrymore gives a remarkably fine interpretation of *Monsieur Duval.* Robert Taylor as *Armand* is excellent in the role of lover, and though in the tragic scenes his acting is less mature, he is well cast in a sympathetic part. But without George Cukor's inspired direction and art director Cedric Gibbon's never failing genius, even this splendid cast could not have made the production what it is, a conspicuous example of the best in motion picture art.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too mature a theme **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

CHAMPAGNE WALTZ

Gladys Swarthout, Fred MacMurray, Jack Oakie, Fritz Leiber, Veloz and Yolanda. Direction by A. Edward Sutherland. Paramount.

American jazz is played as a foil to the melodious waltzes of Strauss and even cleverly combined, in a romance of modern Vienna, with elaborate settings, gaiety and colorful episodes. Gladys Swarthout has a good selection of songs, and she is at her best in the last number which comes as a climax to the film. In the story she is *Elsa,* the daughter of an old musician who finds the inroads of modern jazz bands insupportable until the engaging *Buzzy,* played by Fred MacMurray, is able to find a compromise between the old and the new. A charmingly naive love-affair ensues between the young people, and a humorous sub-plot is included with Jack Oakie and others buying tea-sets from a bogus countess.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Delightful, musical **Children, 8 to 12** Little interest

• • •

CONFLICT

John Wayne, Jean Rogers, Tommy Bupp. Story by Jack London. Screen play by Charles Logue and Walter Weems. Direction by David Howard. Universal.

This picture is based on the activities of a gang of crooked prizefight promoters, working small towns and lumber camps in the old West. Their method is to "plant" one of their own men in a town, where he is to exhibit his boxing ability and win the confidence of the community. When the promoters arrive with another man and challenge all comers, the local champion is to be beaten, thus enabling the gang to win large sums in betting. The fighter, through his rescue of a boy from drowning, soon becomes a hero to the townspeople. He falls in love with an attractive local girl and when the time comes for the frameup he cannot bring himself to carry out the plot. In spite of the hackneyed story the characterizations are well done and interest is maintained. The atmosphere of gambling and dishonest fighting is not pleasant but is relieved by the regeneration of the principal character.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

THE COUNTRY GENTLEMAN

Ole Olson, Chic Johnson, Lila Lee, Joyce Compton. Direction by Ralph Staub. Republic.

This film relates the adventures of a pair of shady promoters who decide to change their ways and, as a first good deed, attempt to return a runaway boy to his widowed mother. Their old habits prove too deep-seated when they learn they can gain control of some bonus money for a speculative oil well. Fate alone preserves their new-found honesty. Obviously the business methods are unethical, and the humor, as might be expected, is rough and ready. It is an easy-going picture with a sprinkling of good lines and no strain on the intellect.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

CRACK-UP

Peter Lorre, Brian Donlevy, Helen Wood, Ralph Morgan, Thomas Beck. Story by John Goodrich. Direction by Malcolm St. Clair. Twentieth Century-Fox.

The participation of Peter Lorre in any

picture carries a suggestion of abnormality and gruesomeness, and before the end both are realized. The main plot deals with the work of international spies seeking to learn an important secret of U. S. aviation. Lorre, as usual, is successful in his particular kind of acting, and there are several strong, contrasting roles. The flying scenes are remarkable for suspense, rising to a high climax in the final catastrophe. There is a heavy depressing undertone throughout, but on the whole it is an interesting though unpleasant picture.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

CRIMINAL LAWYER

Lee Tracy, Margot Grahame. Direction by Christy Cabanne. R.K.O.

It seems from this picture that the road to success for an aspiring lawyer may be traversed only with the assistance of the criminal element in the community. *Barry Brandon* is a lawyer in the pay of night club interests and rises to the position of district attorney through his influential clients. The court room scene in which he defends the girl whom he later loves is strikingly vivid, but his tactics would not be permitted in any court outside the movies. The production has an unwholesome atmosphere with much drinking and too many disreputable characters.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

GOD'S COUNTRY AND THE WOMAN

George Brent, Beverly Roberts, Barton MacLane, Robert Barrat. Based on the novel by James Oliver Curwood. Direction by William Keighley. Warner Bros.

With each new picture, Technicolor comes a degree closer to the true color palette of nature with firmer flesh tones, warmer fabric hues and fresher greens and blues in leaves and waterways. The far-flung northern forest land is particularly beautiful in this story of the rought lumber camps, where two rival companies, one owned by a woman, fight for supremacy. *Steve,* the younger brother in the *Russett* camp, has more regard for fair-dealing and is more susceptible to women's smiles than iron-jawed *Jeff,* and thereon hangs the tale. George Brent is very good throughout, Beverly Roberts is pleasing. The plot is typical of Curwood, a vigorous drama of the wilds. The high point is reached when *Steve* dynamites the log jam impounding the *Barton* logs.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Too rough

• • •

GOLD DIGGERS OF 1937

Dick Powell, Joan Blondell, Glenda Farrell, Victor Moore. Direction by Frank Lloyd. Warner Brothers.

"Gold Diggers," 1937 model, is as enlivening as ever. On a thin thread of plot the songs, comic incidents and spectacular dance ensembles are glitteringly strung together. A stranded chorus girl aids a young man to sell a million dollar life insurance policy to an important theatrical producer, and the action thereafter is motivated by rivalry between the insurance company representatives who are fearful lest the policy holder may die prematurely, and the beneficiaries who are hopeful that he will. Photography and scenic effects are beautiful and the lyrics are unusually clever. It is spirited holiday entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good **Children, 8 to 12** If interester in musical comedy

• • •

GREAT GUY

James Cagney, Mae Clarke, James Burke, Edward Brophy, Edward McNamara. Based on the Johnny Cave stories by James Edward Grant. Direction by John G. Blystone. R.K.O.-Pathe.

Pugnacious James Cagney, as *Johnny Cave,* a deputy in the Weights and Measures Department, uses his various abilities in his effort to defeat a powerful ring of grafters and politicians in the "short-weight" racket. He administers a magnificent licking to the ward-heeler, extricates himself from a difficult situation later when he is accused of blackmail and even carries off his arch-enemy's secretary in romantic triumph. Cagney plays with his usual gusto and gives a good account of himself, and other members of the cast deserve credit in this straightforward bid for honesty in public office.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Little interest

• • •

THE GREAT O'MALLEY

Pat O'Brien, Humphrey Bogart, Ann Sheridan, Frieda Inescort, Sybil Jason, Donald Crisp. Direction by William Dieterle. Warner Bros.

In a human if sentimental story, Pat O'Brien plays the role of *"The Great O'Malley,"* a policeman overzealous in his strict administration of the letter of the law. Association with the crippled child of a man for whose prison sentence he is indirectly responsible, at last teaches him the distinction between fanatical upholding of minor statutes and the performance of duty tempered with judgment and mercy. There is food for thought here but also a danger lest to immature minds the scales may seem weighted with too much sympathy for a man who has committed a crime of violence. In real life, law-abiding persons might prefer a zealous policeman to a lax one, but for the purposes of fiction, *O'Malley* is a nicely drawn character who wins sympathy when he refuses to prosecute a

man who has shot him. Light comedy alleviates the more serious aspects of the film, and the audience never doubts that the ending will be a happy one.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Questionable **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature

• • •

JOHN MEAD'S WOMAN

Edward Arnold, Francine Larrimore, Gail Patrick, George Bancroft. Direction by Richard Wallace. Paramount.

Echoing a recent film, Edward Arnold in this production is again a lumber king whose ruthless pursuit of power leads him to the brink of ruin. There is also a girl of the streets whom he loves, and the conflict between sophisticated wealth and the rough outdoor life. Underlying the personal story is the larger theme of deforestation. The treatment is melodramatic, and the characters are cheap and artificial. Sordid situations make an unpleasant atmosphere, and the lumberman's last-minute reform is unconvincing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

JUNGLE PRINCESS

Dorothy Lamour, Ray Milland, Akim Tamiroff, Hugh Buckler, Molly Lamont. Direction by William Thiele. Paramount.

Terrified natives appeal to an English hunter in Africa to kill the bewitched "Laughing Tiger" which is decimating their stock. From this auspicious beginning unfolds a fantasy of jungle adventure, with stampeding elephants, friendly apes and savage tribesmen. *Ulah,* beautiful native girl, living alone in the wilds with her pet tiger and a trained ape as her only companions, rescues *Chris,* the hunter, from the tiger, and an idyllic love affair follows. *Chris'* financee comes in search of her vanished lover and the age old battle between civilization and barbarism is exemplified in the struggle between the girls for their man. Scenes of horror and impending torture ensue when savages, determined to kill the tiger and his mistress, capture the party. The jungle settings are beautiful, and the animal photography is remarkable. The story, in spite of its incredible nature and some minor inconsistencies, is a thrilling tale of adventure and romance. Unfortunately it is marred by terrible deaths and the unbearable suspense when the party awaits torture at the stake.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

LOVE ON THE RUN

Joan Crawford, Clark Gable, Franchot Tone, Reginald Owen, Mona Barrie. Direction by W. S. Van Dyke. M-G-M.

There is a difference between a mischievous rogue and an unscrupulous blackguard. Because *Michael Anthony* (Clark Gable) is too nearly the latter, "Love on the Run" is not so pleasing as it might have been. It is a farcical treatment of the theme that all's fair in love and newspaper reporting. Rival reporters, supposedly devoted friends outside of their profession, are in Europe covering an international society wedding and a stratosphere flight. A rather episodic plot traces their adventures on an exciting chase through France where *Michael* and the truant bride-elect are pursued by ruthless spies bent on retrieving stolen maps. The other reporter, *Barnabas,* played by Franchot Tone, brings up the rear, always in hot pursuit of news scoops and usually finding himself double-crossed by the obnoxious *Michael.* On the credit side of the picture are its fast pace, some lovely pastoral scenes, and a certain amount of humor of the harmless "knock-knock" variety.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Needs adult evaluation **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Charlie Ruggles, Alice Brady, Lyle Talbot, Jack LaRue. Original story by John Francis Larkin. Screen play by Dore Schary. Direction by Norman McLeod. Paramount.

Orville, somewhat seedy editor of the "Birds and Bees" column of the "Evening Recorder" and enthusiastic Boy Scout leader, is skyrocketed to fame when, in his absence, his wife *Melba* jazzes up his column. She joins vigorously in the local campaign for the mayoralty and steps on too many political toes, with the result that the couple is kidnapped to silence the comments. From a mountain cabin hide-out *Orville* and *Melba* are rescued by loyal Scouts. The film is well acted and directed, the lines and situations are amusing and the training and ability of the Boy Scouts are pleasingly pictured.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

• • •

MYSTERIOUS CROSSING

James Dunn, Jean Rogers, Andy Devine, John Eldridge, Hobart Cavanaugh, Herbert Rawlinson, J. Farrell MacDonald. Direction by Arthur Lubin. Universal.

With nothing to recommend it above others of its type, this is a routine murder mystery topped off by a satisfactory solution of the crime and a romance between the sleuth and an attractive girl who helps him track the criminal. A newspaper reporter arriving at New Orleans by boat happens to see a fellow passenger pushed overboard, and, sensing the possibilities of a story, manages to obtain possession of the victim's luggage and thus to uncover clues to the murder.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended **Children, 8 to 12** No

NIGHT WAITRESS

Margot Grahame, Gordon Jones, Vinton Howard. Direction by Lew Landers. R.K.O.

There seems little excuse for showing this crook melodrama, with its unsavory characters and sordid setting. A waitress in a waterfront restaurant inadvertently becomes involved with a gang of thieves and witnesses a murder. None of the characters is interesting or sympathetic, and the story is trite. The girl falls in love with an ex-rumrunner who aids the police in capturing the criminals. Acting and direction are undistinguished.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

ONE IN A MILLION

Sonja Henie, Don Ameche, Adolphe Menjou, Ned Sparks, Jean Herscholt, Ritz Brothers, Borah Minevitch. Story and screen play by Leonard Praskins and Mark Kelly. Direction by Sidney Lanfield. 20th Century-Fox.

An old man, having lost his Olympic medals because of a false charge of professionalism, trains his daughter from childhood with the one idea of having her win her event in the games. This plot provides plenty of opportunity for *Sonja Henie* to display her dimpling smile and her dazzling skill and grace on skates in a variety of settings without unduly taxing her ability as an actress. She has her final triumph in the spectacular show on ice at the Madison Square Garden. The Ritz Brothers are amusing, especially in their bullfight on skates, but a little of Borah Minevitch and his gang would have been better than too much. Withal it is a most enjoyable film.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

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ONE WAY PASSAGE

(Reprinted from Sept., 1932.)
William Powell, Kay Francis. Direction by Tay Garnett. Warner Bros.

A man and a woman exchange glances in a Hong Kong bar and each is instantly infatuated with the other. When chance brings them together on an ocean liner they fall romantically in love. Though the audience is allowed to share in the knowledge that the lovers are fated to die, she from illness, he to pay the penalty for a crime, the picture is neither sordid nor tragic. It is purely a romantic episode illumined by the glamorous charm of Kay Francis' personality.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too sophisticated **Children, 8 to 12** No

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PENNIES FROM HEAVEN

Bing Crosby, Madge Evans, Edith Fellows, Donald Meek. Direction by Norman McLeod. Columbia.

Pennies tossed from tenement windows into the hat of a slum troubadour give the film its title. Bing Crosby as the troubadour does not confine his background entirely to New York streets. He first appears in prison where he makes friends with a condemned man; the friendship leads to his taking under his protection the prisoner's daughter, a problem child who has been a "case" of the county welfare department. The scene shifts to the "Haunted House Cafe" where Crosby, a horde of darkies and the girl provide weird entertainment. At the finale everything is nicely arranged for a happy future for the crooner and his difficult ward. Since Bing Crosby bursts into song on all occasions, his fans will get their money's worth from this bit of light entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining **Children, 8 to 12** Questionable

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THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS

Barbara Stanwyck, Preston Foster, Barry Fitzgerald, Eileen Crowe, Denis O'Dea, Una O'Connor, F. J. McCormick, Arthur Shields, Moroni Olsen. From the play by Sean O'Casey. Direction by John Ford. R.K.O.

Here is a picture portraying the ill-fated Irish Rebellion of 1916 with great attention to historic accuracy and detail. Though full of action, with striking character studies, remarkably fine photography, plenty of comedy relief and good direction, it nevertheless leaves one dissatisfied. The treatment is episodic and somewhat confused. The story seems to be continually jumping from one theme to another. In the street fighting it is often difficult to tell which side is which, and many sequences are so dark as to be almost indistinguishable. The sordid sorrow and misery which pervade the film are absolutely true to history but they are most depressing; unless one likes horrors the fighting is too realistically shown with not much left to the imagination. Barbara Stanwyck as *Nora* has little to do but weep, but this she does extremely well. Preston Foster as *Jack* is satisfactory in a part that offers small opportunity. Most of the characters are well played with special honors going to Una O'Connor as *Mrs. Gogan* and Barry Fitzgerald as *Fluther*. Eileen Crowe as *Bessie Burgess* and Denis O'Dea as the communist *Covey* are convincing. Most of the dialogue between Jack and Nora is stagy. Some of the comedy dialogue is quick and good although there is too much of it. Scenes showing looting by the mob are most realistic. On the whole the good points are somewhat submerged by brutal misery. It impresses one as propaganda but whether for the cause of Irish freedom or against war is not always clear. Those who like the Irish School of

Drama will think the picture is good but others will not be enthusiastic.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No—too violent **Children, 8 to 12** Positively NO

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RACING LADY

Ann Dvorak, Smith Ballew, Harry Carey, Berton Churchill, Hattie McDaniel. Screen play by Dorothy Yost, Thomas Lenn and Cortland Fitzsimmons. Based on "All Scarlet," by Damon Runyan and "Odds Are Even," by J. Robert Bren and Norman Houston. Direction by Wallace Fox. R.K.O.

A new wrinkle in a racetrack picture is the woman horse-trainer. With the dominant idea of giving her own horse, *Katydid,* an opportunity to win the Santa Anita Handicap, *Ruth Martin* accepts a challenge to produce winning horses as an advertisement for a leading automobile manufacturer. It is a good program picture, especially for those who enjoy the excitement of the turf. The acting is adequate, and the darkies contribute to atmosphere and the comedy element.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Not sufficient Interest

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REMBRANDT

Charles Laughton, Gertrude Lawrence. Direction by Alexander Korda. London Films. United Artists.

Because of its title this film runs the risk of being relegated to the cobwebby corner of highbrow productions, but anyone who has ever seen Charles Laughton's notable characterizations will not want to miss his "Rembrandt." The story is sketchy, a succession of glimpses of the great painter. Beginning with the death of his first wife when he was a rich man and acclaimed by his contemporaries, he is shown as he gradually loses his following and becomes at last almost a pauper, eccentric if not doting, but happy when he can beg enough money to buy paints and canvas. Laughton is superb. His gift for giving life and individuality to his impersonations is unequalled. His acting and the remarkable photography are the outstanding qualities of the film. It is said that the camera man did not imitate the paintings of Rembrandt, but he does present a series of interiors, groupings and individual portraits that Rembrant might have painted. Elsa Lanchester contributes an appealing character study of the second wife whose loving sympathy and wisdom enabled the great master to continue his work when he was deeply in debt and the butt of ridicule.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Beyond their appreciation **Children, 8 to 12** No interest

• • •

SINNER TAKE ALL

Bruce Cabot, Margaret Lindsay, Joseph Calleia, Stanley Ridges, Vivian Osborne, Charley Grapewin. From the novel by Whitman Chambers. Direction by Errol Taggart. M-G-M.

The picture centers about the perennially popular theme of mystery murder and maintains its grim secret to the end. A millionaire and his family have received threats of death and in spite of police protection, two members of the family meet untimely ends. When the ubiquitous news hawk appears on the scene, he promptly falls in love with the beautiful heiress who begins by hating him and then loves him. The story is well acted an directed. The murders take place off the stage, thus sparing the feelings of the sentitive.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended **Children, 8 to 12** No

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STOLEN HOLIDAY

Kay Francis, Claude Rains, Ian Hunter, Allson Skipworth. Original story by Warren Duff and Virginia Kellogg. Screen play by Casey Robinson. Direction by Michael Curtis. First National.

The notorious Staviski scandal should have formed the groundwork for a thrilling drama but in this picture the original idea has been obscured by an extraneous love interest. *Stefan Orloff* is the moving spirit of a group of French money-lenders who have become wealthy by juggling the securities entrusted to them. *Orloff* falls in love with *Mlle. Picot* and establishes her as a fashionable dress designer. On the even of the inevitable crash of the money-lending ring, *Orloff* attempts to save himself by a spectacular coup which ends in tragedy. The contrast between Mr. Rains' sincere and intelligent characterization of *Orloff* and the artificiality of the plot is so sharp that the whole production seems unbalanced. The secondary love interest is trite, and does little to further the action. Kay Francis as the leading dress designer of Paris is enabled to display a succession of beautiful creations, which she wears with great distinction.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

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STOWAWAY

Shirley Temple, Robert Young, Alice Faye, Eugene Pallette, Helen Westley, Arthur Treacher, J. Edward Bromberg. Story by Sam Engel. Screen play by William Conselman, Arthur Sheekman and Nat Perrin. Direction by William A. Selter. 20th Century-Fox.

In the opening scenes of this picture we find the little film star in a foreign setting, China. She even has a Chinese name and, as the ward of two missionaries, is really nobody's little girl. But later when she creeps into the rumble seat of a young American million-

aire's car and becomes, unwittingly a stowaway on a steamer, we are transferred to the romantic atmosphere of a luxurious liner. Here Shirley exerts her charm upon her debonair adopted "uncle" (owner of the automobile), the girl with whom he falls in love and the entire crew. There are some catchy new juvenile songs and a specialty number in which the young actress does clever impersonations of screen celebrities. Since most of the action falls well within the range of a child's interests, it is a pity that an artificial and highly implausible scene in a Reno divorce court room should be introduced at the end. The incident is far-fetched and introduces a jarring note in an otherwise charming story. Happily the memory of it becomes partially obliterated while we listen, in the final scene, to this exquisite child's rendering of the happy holiday song, "That's What I Want for Christmas." This is not the best Shirley Temple picture but it is a welcome contribution to family entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

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THAT GIRL FROM PARIS

Lily Pons, Gene Raymond, Jack Oakie, Herman Bing, Mischa Auer, Lucille Ball. Story by Jane Murfin and suggested by a story published in Young's Magazine by J. Carey Wonderly. Direction by Leigh Jason. R.K.O.

Lily Pons is justly one of the most popular of the operatic stars; her glorious voice rises in clear bell-like tones whether she renders the most difficult aria or a light modern song. In this film her most inspiring number is *Una Voca Poca Fa* from the Barber of Seville, her cleverest the *Blue Danube* done in jazz-time. Aside from the music, the play is ill-suited to the petite French singer whose gift for comedy is of a gentler nature than the boisterous fun prevalent among the male members of the cast. Rough and tumble farce replete with gags is supplied by Gene Raymond and Jack Oakie. The story starts in Paris when *Nikki* (Lily Pons) meets *Windy* (Gene Raymond), an orchestra leader about to sail for America, and goes along as a stowaway. The action progresses easily, and there is never a dull moment. The effect, however, is like that of serving hot dogs, be they ever so tasty, with a glass of champagne.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Sophisticated **Children, 8 to 12** No

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THREE SMART GIRLS

Charles Winninger, Nan Gray, Barbara Read, Deanna Durbin, Alice Brady, Binnie Barnes. Original and screen play by Adele Commandini. Direction by Henry Koster. Universal.

When three sisters undertake to bring about a reconciliation between their divorced parents, their maneuvers furnish the material for a novel and refreshing comedy. The picture is well acted, swift-moving with interest never lagging. The coloratura singing of thirteen-year-old Deanna Durbin is truly remarkable considering her age, and it is brought in most naturally. She also gives a good performance as an adolescent hoyden, high spirited, masterful and resourceful in getting her own way, however questionable her methods. Much of the charm of the production is due to the fine direction by Henry Koster.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

TRAIL DUST

William Boyd, Jimmy Ellison, George Hayes. Direction by Nate Watt. Paramount.

The latest of the "Hopalong Cassidy" series shows a battle between lively factions of cattlemen over the price at which they shall sell their stock. When word comes that the village of Plainsville is without food following a severe drouth, *"Hopalong"* (William Boyd) organizes a group of men and drives a herd of cattle to the relief of the town. They are obliged to fight their way throughout the monotonous dusty trip against the resistance of their enemies. The monotony is somewhat relieved by occasional songs and the humorous remarks of *"Windy."*

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** No

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WHITE HUNTER

Warner Baxter, June Lang, Gail Patrick, Alison Skipworth, Wilfrid Lawson. Based on a story by Gene Markey. Direction by Irving Cummings. 20th Century-Fox.

The picture is a far-fetched drama of tangled loves and hates and clandestine rendezvous. The African setting is of little value in the development of the plot. Adventures with lions and leopards are incidental, and in no sense is this an "animal picture." *Michael Verek,* a wealthy Englishman, while hunting in Africa with his wife and daughter, inadvertently engages as guide "The White Hunter," a man with whom *Mrs. Verek* had formerly been in love and to whom the daughter also is attracted. The solution of the triangle is brought about by the guide's heroic rescue of the girl. Most interesting moments in the film are those devoted to fascinating pictures of a lioness and her cubs. The photography throughout is exceptional.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

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THE WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY CLUB
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

FEBRUARY, 1937

For practical use we suggest filing bulletins where they may be easily accessible for reference. Films are not released simultaneously over the country. You will need these reviews for constant reference.

Feature Films Reviewed In This Issue

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*Don't Pull Your Punches
*Every Sunday
*The Holy Terror
*Let's Make a Million
Maid of Salem
*Man of Affairs
Melody for Two
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*Ready, Willing, and Able
She's Dangerous
*They Wanted to Marry
Under Cover of Night
*We're On the Jury
With Love and Kisses
*"Woman-Wise"

***Film suitable for family entertainment but not necessarily appropriate for children under 12 or for children unaccompanied by adults.**

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EDITORIAL

The following is quoted from a manual prepared by the Legion of Decency and authorized by the Episcopal committee for circulation among the Legion's members and other groups. It is reprinted in part from an article which appeared in "Motion Picture Herald"—Quigley Publishing Company, Rockefeller Center, New York.

HOW TO "JUDGE MORALITY" OF FILMS

It is generally recognized that entertainment is either helpful or harmful. A clear distinction must, therefore, be made between

(a) entertainment which tends to elevate or to relax men and women physically or mentally tired with the duties and occupations of everyday life, and

(b) entertainment which tends to lower their ideals and moral standards of life.

Film stories, as a rule, deal with men and women who are facing some problem in their lives and are trying to solve it. In every screen drama we see human beings in action or we see them reacting to certain influences.

When leading characters, either by what they say or do, express their attitude toward right and wrong, or when they accept or reject some standard of conduct, those in the audience are very likely to be influenced by them.

The purpose of the Legion of Decency is to see that motion pictures conform to the accepted and traditional morality upon which the home and civilization are founded.

By "traditional standards of morality" is meant such principles of conduct of conduct as the following: "Murder is wrong. Stealing is wrong. Perjury is wrong. Honor is due to father and mother." These standards, together with many relating to sex, follow from the code of right and wrong written into the consciences of men by God Himself. They have been generally known and accepted during all the centuries, not only by Christians, but by Jews, pagans, and by men of no religious affiliation. They are expressed in the Ten Commandments.

Many persons who readily admit the existence of these traditional laws find it difficult to obey them, owing to the weakness of human nature. If there were no evasion of the principles

laid down by them, neither their validity nor their binding force upon the human conscience would be questioned. A film story making a powerful argument against accepted moral standards could easily persuade such persons to change their convictions about right and wrong.

The following may serve as examples:

A. This is a deeply moving triangle story. It is entirely devoid of salacious details, but it pro-poses the doctrine that when a man's wife is selfish and unsympathetic he is entirely justified in turning to another woman for love and happiness. In short, the film condones and justifies adultery. It does this, not by ethical arguments but by emotional appeal. Deeply stirred by the picture, many of those witnessing it are apt to sympathize with the hero, approve his conduct, and thus change their former convictions. They may be led to believe that under certain circumstances adultery is excusable. Here is a false moral standard, wholly at variance with traditional beliefs.

B. A story of young romance. Because of some circumstances—parental objections, let us say, of lack of money—the hero and heroine are forced to postpone marriage indefinitely. They are young; they are persuaded that they cannot live without each other; they refuse to await marriage. Here is a film which by its sympathetic treatment presents most speciously the doctrine that sex experience is but the innocent culmination of love. It preaches that true lovers would be fools to defer it until marriage, and that pre-marital relations in such cases are pardonable. Because the hero is attractive and the heroine beautiful, the audience is inclined to sympathize with them, and even approve what they do. It may be persuaded that deep and tender love excuses sin. Here, again, is a false moral standard, wholly at variance with traditional morality.

C. An old-fashioned plot in which the heroine sacrifices her virtue as the price of success in some splendid attempt—to win the opportunity of becoming a great artist, to save her country as a spy, to forward a brother's professional career, etc., etc. The picture implies that the sacrifice is a noble one, and asks the approval of the audience, which is too often given! Thus the film preaches that a good end justifies evil means, and that sinful conduct can under certain circumstances be justified. This is a false moral doctrine, wholly at variance, not only with the will of God and the teaching of fundamental morality, but with the interests of society in general.

D. A gangster melodrama in which the leading character is presented as a clever and resourceful lawbreaker. He is successful financially. He is popular and lives luxuriously. The police, the guardians of the law, are made to appear inefficient and stupid. The "crook" easily outwits them, meanwhile displaying to the audience details of criminal procedure—the opening of safes, clever provisions for escape, the use of fire-arms, anesthetics, etc. Even though in the end the "crook" is brought to justice, such a film is potentially dangerous to public welfare, since it tends to glorify crime and the criminal and suggests ways of committing crime. It typifies the wrong kind of entertainment.

The case might be summed up as follows:

Traditional moral standards, based on the law of God, teach that certain acts are sinful and that certain acts are virtuous. Many films, however, by their insidious and attractive presentation of false standards, induce their patrons to change their lifelong convictions and to believe that, occasionally, at least, certain sins are virtues and certain virtues are sins. All this means moral disaster, for when convictions are perverted, conduct invariably undergoes a change for the worse.

The Legion of Decency holds that far more than any other form of popular entertainment, the motion pictures have the obligation of not subverting traditional morality by the presentation of films that are degrading. It urges that their immense influence be used rather for the education, recreation and general welfare of the people. The stage and books of fiction, with their helpful or harmful influence, reach many thousands each year. But their number is insignificant when compared with the millions who are influenced by the screen. The drama and books, moreover, appeal for the greater part to the mature and the educated—that is, to those whose moral convictions are, in a measure, fixed. But motion pictures set patterns of human conduct before all classes. Particularly do they reach the young, who naturally are eager for experience, either personal or vicarious, and whose moral standards may be easily raised or lowered.

In brief, because the motion pictures reach greater numbers and speak with extraordinary pursuasiveness to impressionable people, their producers have special moral obligations to the public. They should avoid confusing morals. They should present only correct standards of life.

• • •

Every subscribed who enjoys "Motion Picture Reviews" and believes in the cause for which we are working will increase our usefulness by obtaining a new subscriber

—THE EDITORS.

FEATURE FILMS

BULLDOG DRUMMOND ESCAPES

Ray Milland, Heather Angel, Porter Hall, Sir Guy Standing, Reginald Denny, Fay Holden. Direction by James Hogan. From the novel by H. C. McNeile and Gerard Fairlie. Paramount.

When a young woman is held prisoner by the man who has murdered her brother, *Bulldog Drummond* comes to the rescue. Action takes place in a dense fog which continually filters in through doors and windows giving the required touch of mystery. Big-eyed Heather Angel is the perfect, helpless maiden in destress, and Ray Milland as *Drummond* acts his role with gusto and charm. Dialogue is amusing, and the mechanics of thrill-making are well executed, but a poor plot keeps this picture from being up to the standard of other films in the series.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Passable

Children, 8 to 12
Unsuitable and too exciting

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CARNIVAL IN FLANDERS

(*La Kermesse Heroique*)

In French with English titles. Francoise Rosary, Alerme, Jean Murat. Direction by Jacques Flyder. From the book by Charles Spaak. Tobis production.

Superlative acting, perfection of detail, and a deliciously witty scenario characterize this production. The setting is *Boom,* a little town in Flanders, the time the 17th century. The inhabitants are busy decking their city for a carnival when they receive news that a Spanish Duke and his retinue are to arrive and be quartered in their houses the following night. The mayor conceives a unique plan to avert the expected ruthless invasion, but the mayor's wife has a better idea, and while the men are busy with their own affairs, the ladies band together and take matters into their own hands. How they welcomed the visitors and kept the peace makes a spicy, risque and intriguing bit of cinematography so deftly presented that American audiences will marvel at it's tactful handling Settings alone are worth the price of admission. Francoise Rosay as the mayor's wife is superb and other members of the cast are uniformily excellent.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Sophisticated

Children, 8 to 12
No interest

COLLEGE HOLIDAY

Jack Benny, George Burns, Gracie Allen, Mary Boland, Marsha Hunt, Martha Raye. Direction by Frank Tuttle. Paramount.

In this film-vaudeville, a collection of comedy, specialty acts, ballet numbers and songs are presented in an episodic musical-comedy type of story, with the college atmosphere provided by the "California Collegians". The holders of a mortgage on a hotel are about to turn the premises into a laboratory for experiments in eugenics when the owners decide to save their property by making it a Mecca for college students on holiday. The combination of the two ideas results in a lot of nonsense which skates on the thin ice of innuendo without quite breaking through. Drawing cards to the picture are the popular screen and radio stars who appear in the cast. For their public, the production will probably prove entertaining.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Passable

Children, 8 to 12
No

• • •

CONDEMNED ROW

See "We Who Are About to Die," reviewed in November, 1936.

• • •

A DOCTOR'S DIARY

George Bancroft, Helen Burgess, John Trent, Ruth Coleman, Charles D. Waldron. Direction by Charles Vidor. B. P. Schulberg production.

Trading upon the public's increasing interest in the problems of the medical profession, this picture sensationally presents the thesis that certain unwise or mercenary doctors neglect their less influential patients for their rich clientele, and that a nurse or a fellow physician who dares to criticise is likely to be ostracized. Unfortunately, to the general public, the picture is dramatic enough to carry conviction. Actually it uses the rare, deplorable circumstances to discredit the medical profession as a whole. While some audiences may possibly enjoy the delusion that they are at last hearing the truth about hospitals, others will not only detect the minor absurdities in this production but will actually resent the falsity of its conclusions.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
No

Children, 8 to 12
No

DON'T PULL YOUR PUNCHES

Barton MacLane, June Travis, Wayne Morris. Direction by B. Reeves Eason. Warner Bros.

The likeable young hero of this prize-fight picture is a Texas cow-hand who temporarily deserts the cattle range for the ring. The film is a novelty of it's type in that the plot does not involve crooked promoters. *Rush Conway,* stranded in New York, is befriended by a little news-boy who sells papers at Madison Square Garden. Chance brings him to the notice of a fight manager, and he eventually becomes the heavy-weight challenger. Dramatic action is provided by pictures of fights and the attempts of the youth to avoid being matched against his friend who is the defender of the title. The plot is interestingly and logically worked out and the acting is adequate. There is no striving for melodramatic effects. The picture though unimportant is good light entertainment for all who have interest in prize-fighting.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good — **Children, 8 to 12** Little interest

• • •

EVERY SUNDAY

Deanna Durbin, Judy Garland. Story by Maurice Grashin. Direction by Felix E. Feist. M-G.M.

A delightful little musical interlude presents the early work of Deanna Durbin. Deanna's lovely voice and the dancing of her friend Judy save the day for the elderly orchestra leader who is about to lose his position when he can no longer hold the Sunday crowds.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good — **Children, 8 to 12** Good

• • •

THE HOLY TERROR

Jane Withers, Anthony Martin, Leah Ray, Joan Davis, El Brendel, Joe Lewis. Direction by James Tinling. 20th Century-Fox.

Jane Withers scores again in comedy with able assistance from El Brendel and Joe Lewis, while Anthony Martin and Leah Ray cover the romantic phase of the film. A naval base is used as colorful background for the pranks of little *Corky* who is designated as the "Holy Terror," beloved of the sailors and detested by those in command until she proves herself sufficiently quick-witted to thwart the activities of spies in search of specifications for a new aeroplane. While the music is snappy and the songs catchy, there are those who will regret that Jane Withers' musical talents are given prominence at the expense of her undoubted ability to act.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good — **Children, 8 to 12** Good

• • •

LET'S MAKE A MILLION

Edward Everett Horton, Charlotte Wynters, Porter Hall, Purnell Pratt, Margaret Seddon, Margaret McWade. Direction by Ray McCarey. Paramount.

The small town boob, played in this picture by Edward Everett Horton, is so like a dozen other characters in Mr. Horton's repertoire that, to many people, he will seem like an old acquaintance. The story too is familiar. *Harrison Gentry,* none too bright and dominated by his maiden aunts, is victimized by swindlers. Having lost not only his own but his friends' money, he blunders into a bit of good fortune and becomes the man of the hour. The film is passably amusing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes — **Children, 8 to 12** No interest

• • •

MAID OF SALEM

Claudette Colbert, Fred Mac Murray, Harvey Stephens, Louise Dresser, Gale Sondergaard, Edward Ellis, E. E. Clive, Bonita Granville. Direction by Frank Lloyd. Original by Bradley King. Screen Play by Walter Ferris, Bradley King and Durward Grinstead. Paramount.

Salem in 1692 is the background of this impressive photoplay. The opening scenes show the home life and the community activities of the Puritan settlers; candle making, visiting neighbors, young girls reading a forbidden book on witchcraft, a "house-raising," Sunday prayer meeting where the Minister usually inveighed against frivolity and the sexton promptly rapped on the head any inattentive or sleeping member of the congregation.

Suddenly the atmosphere changes, and the once peaceful community is seething with bigotry, suspicion, superstition and terror. Gossip and a child's desire to attract attention have started the wave of fanatical persecution that according to history resulted in the hanging of nineteen innocent persons who were suspected of being witches. Throughout the tragic account of this frightful episode runs the romantic love story of a Puritan girl and a young political refugee from Virginia. The

casting of Claudette Colbert and Fred Mac Murray in these parts is at once an asset and a detriment. Miss Colbert is exquisite in her Puritan dress, as charming and graceful a heroine as could be imagined, and her acting is extremely effective, but the high-lighting of her familiar delicate beauty detracts from the realism of the film. The inclusion of a more or less stereotyped love interest, no matter how charmingly portrayed, puts the stamp of romantic fiction on a picture that might otherwise seem as undeniably authentic as an historical document. The production's real claim to distinction comes not from the story of the young lovers but from the authenticity of its atmosphere and the expert presentation of the tremendous drama inherent in its theme.

Adolescents, 12 to 16	Children, 8 to 12
Interesting	Too emotional

• • •

MAN OF AFFAIRS

George Arliss, Rene Ray, Romilly Lunge, Jessie Winter. Direction by Herbert Mason. From a story by Neil Grant. Gaumont-British.

In this latest Arliss picture we have the one-time popular plot of "The Masquerader" brought up to date and converted into comedy. In this case twin brothers exchange roles. One is a prodigal adventurer in far countries, the other a foreign secretary in His Majesty's Government. Opening scenes depict the murder of a powerful sheik by two of his rivals who plan to extort rich mineral concessions from the English Government by placing blame for the crime upon an English tourist. Unable to make his brother adopt a wise course in dealing with the assassins, the adventurer takes his place at the council table and by a clever ruse betrays the conspirators into a confession. An interesting feature of the story is the playing of the double role by Arliss. His acting is polished as always, but Arliss fans will be disappointed in a story which makes but small demand upon the actor's talents. The picture is light and amusing. The characterizations are delightful, and audiences will relish the absurdities and the smart dialogue. Though not by an means the best of this artist's vehicles the film is a good evening's entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16	Children, 8 to 12
Entertaining	No interest

• • •

MELODY FOR TWO

James Melton, Patricia Ellis, Marie Wilson, Fred Keating, Winifred Shaw. Direction by Louis King. Warner Bros.

The precept that what is good for the radio is good for the cinema audience is proved a fallacy in this film. It takes more than a good singing voice to make a success in motion pictures: stage presence, the art of reading lines and an ability to act, all of which James Melton has yet to acquire. Even the best of actors would be handicapped with such trivial material, a number of night club and radio audition scenes held together by a precariously thin thread of plot. The humor is exemplified by "She eats like a bird. Yeah? A vulture." There are several melodious songs by Melton and a feature song and dance in the sultry manner by Winifred Shaw, which call for applause—and that will be all.

Adolescents, 12 to 16	Children, 8 to 12
Poor entertainment	No

• • •

THE MIGHTY TREVE

Noah Berry, Jr., Barbara Read, Samuel S. Hinds, Hobart Cavanaugh, Alma Kruger, Tuffy. Direction by Lewis D. Collins. Universal.

To all lovers of dogs and dog stories this picture will be a delight. Noah Beery, Jr., plays the part of *Bud,* a young man left alone and homeless, who with a horse, a parrot and dog for companions starts out to find himself a job. The dog, *Treve,* is the real hero. He does everything that a dog hero should do. He loves his master with undying devotion; he saves human beings from danger; he performs the duties of a well trained shepherd, and he even wins the prize in a show. In the end he has made friends with a confirmed dog-hater, and his master has found romance and a home. In his directing Mr. Collins has missed no opportunity to play upon the sympathy of the audience and in so doing he was ably abetted by the animal actors and by young Noah Berry whose naturalness is most winning. Photographed against a background of lovely out-door scenery, the theme will meet with universal response from audiences of all ages though the pathos is sometimes too sharp for imaginative children.

Adolescents, 12 to 16	Children, 8 to 12
Emotional but very interesting	Not for the sensitive

• • •

NO PLACE LIKE ROME

Frank Albertson and Suzanne Karon. Story by Val Burton, Will Jason and Stanley Rauch. Direction by Reginal Lee Borg. M-G-M.

This marks a new departure: very clever two-reel comedy, which may be used to abate

the problem of the double bill. A delightful burlesque of old Roman customs, garnished with modern quips, this offers talented actors, joyousness, youth and wit. The situation is one to tickle the imagination. In the year 34 there is a royal edict that in order to repopulate Rome, every young man must be married by the time he is twenty-one years old or be thrown to the lions; consequently the bachelor *Flavius* barely escapes the jaws of the beasts.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Amusing

Children, 8 to 12 Mature

• • •

ONCE A DOCTOR

Gordon Oliver, Henry Kolker, Jean Muir, Donald Woods. Direction by William Clemens. Warner Bros.

Presented to the audience as an important picture with good photographic values, sincere acting, careful direction of many scenes, "Once a Doctor" fails to deliver its message because it relies too heavily on coincidence. It is remotely possible that a conscientious, highly-gifted young interne should be visited with all the troubles of Job through no fault of his own, but that he should encounter on the high seas his relentless persecutor with the exact type of brain concussion he is able to cure, places too great a strain on human credulity. The implied slur cast on medical associations because they do not permit brilliant young men to practice without licenses remains unjustified.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

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PARK AVENUE LOGGER

George O'Brien, Beatrice Roberts, Williard Robertson, Ward Bond, Bert Hanlon. From the Saturday Evening Post story by Bruce Hutchison. Direction by David Howard. R.K.O.

This is a melodrama of the logging camps which offers nothing remarkable or unusual, although the beautiful views of the forest country are up to standard for an out-of-door picture. George O'Brien is first seen as a "sissy" when his father packs him off to the wilds to make a man of him. There he uncovers the nefarious schemes of two men who are plotting to ruin his father and the owner of a rival company, who of course has a pretty daughter, and after punching many ruffians on their respective noses, he brings the wicked to justice, emerges triumphant—with the girl. The dialogue is average, the best lines going to Bert Hanlon who contributes some good comedy.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes, especially boys

Children, 8 to 12 Possibly

PENROD AND SAM

Billy Mauch, Frank Craven, Spring Byington, Craig Reynolds, Harry Watson, Jackie Morrow, Bernice Pilot. Direction by William McGann. From the story by Booth Tarkington. Screen play by Lillie Hayward and Hugh Cummings. Warner Bros.

The problem of putting adult interest into a picture featuring children has been solved in this dramatization of "Penrod and Sam" though not by the same methods that Mr. Tarkington employs in his stories. While Mr. Tarkington makes his appeal through humor and a subtle understanding of young emotions, the picture version adds a melodramatic plot and terrifying scenes of an automobile careening through a crowd of children, the accidental shooting of *Verman's* mother and the boys held captive by desperate criminals. The earlier sequences are more nearly what we expect from our knowledge of the "Penrod and Sam" stories; *Penrod's* gang in trouble with the town bully; *Penrod* trying to explain to his father why he cannot divulge the secrets of the society of "Junior G-Men"; *Penrod* and his dog consoling each other when both are in disgrace; *Verman, Penrod's* staunch friend tagging along behind the gang. Then the melodrama begins. In their zeal to be good G-Men the boys set out to trail three robbers. They actually overcome the criminals in a hand-to-hand battle and become the town heroes. Thus the producers in seeking to improve upon the original material have introduced a false and perhaps dangerous ambition to susceptible youngsters who will undoubtedly see the picture. Billy Mauch as *Penrod* is a likeable, idealistic little boy. Frank Cravens as the continually perplexed but loving father is especially good good in his scenes with *Penrod. Verman* played by tiny Philip Hurlie is delightful, and *Duke,* the nondescript dog, is another lovable character. In spite of its faults the picture has many entertaining moments, and in much of it the delightful spirit of Booth Tarkington's stories is gratifyingly evident.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 No; too emotional

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THE PLAINSMAN

Gary Cooper, Jean Arthur, James Ellison, Helen Burgess, Charles Bickford, Robert Barratt, Bruce Cabot, John Miljan. Direction by Cecil B. DeMille. Based upon data from a book by Frank J. Wilstach. Screen play by Waldemar Young, Harold Lamb and Lynn Riggs. Paramount.

Whether we call it an American epic, a frontier melodrama or an historical romance,

"The Plainsman" is intrinsically a "western" and therein lies its appeal. The formula of a "western" calls for a hero who possesses all the qualities of "Young Lochnivar." He must perform daring feats, always with an unselfish purpose, and he must above all possess an unerring sense of justice. Gary Cooper as *Wild Bill Hickok* fits this description like a glove, and to those who have seen him in "The Plainsman" he will seem to be the mould in which all heroes are cast. Other ingredients in the "western" formula are beautiful horses, hard riding, open country, sharpshooting, desperate fighting. All of these are abundantly and superlatively supplied in "The Plainsman." With a thrilling story written round the exploits of real people, a new kind of love interest and the flavor of frontier history, it cannot fail to enthrall an American public. We have been assured that Mr. DeMille allowed no anachronisms to slip into the production. He is to be congratulated upon its atmosphere of realism and authenticity. That *Calamity Jane* was probably less fascinating than Jean Arthur and that *Wild Bill Hickok* actually had drooping mustaches and wore his hair long on his shoulders are matters of no importance.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Too exciting for some

• • •

RAINBOW ON THE RIVER

Bobby Breen, May Robson, Louise Beavers, Alan Mowbray, Charles Butterworth, Benita Hume, Henry O'Neill, Marilyn Knowlden, the Hall Johnson Singers. From the novel "Toinette's Philip" by Mrs. C. . Jamison. Directed by Kurt Neumann. Principal Productions. R.K.O. Release.

Bobby Breen comes to the motion pictures in a play which relies on sentiment rather than subtlety, with scenes from the Old South and New York of the sixties. He is a waif brought up by an old colored woman until the time when the priest who has guided his moral progress traces his surviving relatives. The cast is a good one with May Robson, Louise Beavers, Alan Mowbray, Charles Butterworth and little Marilyn Knowlden all giving very human and laugh-provoking presentations. Bobby's voice is beautiful, whether he sings light snatches of his flower song or the full, soaring strains of the *Ave Maria.* Perhaps it is asking too much to hope that so fine a songster might also be a natural boy. He postures and gazes aloft as expertly as a seasoned church soloist. Worthy of note are the colored actors of the play who take their parts with no visible effort, and whose voices in the chorus add to the musical value of the film.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Good

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READY, WILLING, AND ABLE

Ruby Keeler, Ross Alexander, Allen Jenkins, Louise Fazenda. Direction by Ray Enright. Warner Bros.

A producer, a composer of lyrics, and an actors' agent form an ambitious but penniless trio whose struggles to produce a Broadway show are the theme of the picture. When the over zealous agent mistakes an American girl for a celebrated English actress of the same name, the American, in a spirit of innocent adventure, signs a contract to appear in the same production. Her action almost results in disastrous consequences for the producer, who falls in love with her as rehearsals get under way. The course of true love does not run smooth, but all ends well when, in an unexpected manner at the eleventh hour, the miscreant comes to the rescue of the producer. This is a light, entertaining farce, with interpolations of music and dancing, in which actors, agents and producers are subtly ridiculed.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Little interest

• • •

SHE'S DANGEROUS

Tala Birrel, Cesar Romero, Walter Pidgeon, Walter Brennan, Warren Hymer. Direction by Lewis R. Foster. Universal.

Given a dime novel plot with a woman secret service agent, dressed up patrons of night clubs, a gang of thieves, an airplane wreck, a love interest and a death walk to the gallows, a picture is not likely to be an intellectual triumph, though clever direction may make it absorbingly interesting to audiences who like an exciting spy story. This picture has for its heroine, a young woman whose activities as secret agent have been so successful that when she poses as a criminal, is caught and sentenced to death, there is no one who can identify her as a law-abiding citizen, and only the timely confession of the real criminal preserves her for the necessary happy ending. In this production the director and actors have handled their material unusually well.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No; sordid atmosphere of crime

Children, 8 to 12 No

THEY WANTED TO MARRY

Gordon Jones, Betty Furness, Henry Kolker, E. E. Clive. Direction by Lew Landers. R.K.O.

The trials and compensations of a camera man's life have never been shown in a livelier manner than in this gay and occasionally mad story of one, *Jim Tyler,* who is always landing in jails and hospitals, not to mention elaborate wedding receptions. Gordon Jones is the irrepressible youth, who, abetted by his carrier pigeon *Emily,* seeks to get a candid camera shot of a publicity-shunning capitalist and thereby meets his delectable daughter. It is light pleasant comedy with some good repartee and sufficient pep to make the broken glassware quite unnecessary.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes — **Children, 8 to 12** Little interest

• • •

UNDER COVER OF NIGHT

Edmund Lowe, Florence Rice, Nat Pendleton, Henry Daniels, Sara Haden. Direction by George B. Seitz. M-G-M.

This is excellent entertainment for sensation hungry fans. Though it follows the usual formula of the audience-knows-who-did-it kind of plot, it makes use of ingenious methods of plot complications, and the setting, a university family home, gives a novel and surprisingly respectable atmosphere for a murder story. The picture opens with commencement exercises at a typical university. The retiring president promises that the name of his successor will be given the public the following week. Ambitious and convinced that he deserves the appointment because of a scientific discovery he has recently completed, *Dr. Griswold,* is seen plotting the discomfiture of a colleague. He quarrels with his wife over his attentions to another woman, and when she threatens to leave him and take with her his laboratory notebooks, he deliberately plans a deed which is responsible for her death. Meanwhile the notebook is lost, and in his frantic search for it *Griswold* commits a murder to cover up his guilt. He commits two more murders and is about to accomplish a third when the law discovers evidence to prove his criminal actions. Thus in witnessing four deaths and in collaborating in imagination with Edmund Lowe to solve the mystery, fans will receive their money's worth.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 **No** — **Children, 8 to 12** **No**

WE'RE ON THE JURY

Victor Moore, Helen Broderick, Louise Latimer, Vinton Halworth, Robert McWade. Direction by Ben Holmes. From the play "Ladies of the Jury." by John Frederick Ballard. R.K.O.

Jurors and their foibles are the target for good natured but well aimed ridicule in this amusing farce. On the jury are a chiropractor, a garage owner, a real estate broker, a ticket seller, a bride and several others, the most prominent among them being J. Clarence Beaver, the real estate broker, and Mrs. Dean, housewife. All are more interested in their own problems than in the guilt or innocence of the woman who is on trial for murder, and their inconsequential conversations and absurd behavior afford hilarious comedy. Victor Moore and Helen Broderick are outstanding. Others in the cast are extremely capable and make the most of the clever lines and situations. While some few people may react unfavorably to such an unflattering picturization of the administration of justice, most audiences will enjoy its obvious exaggerations and its ludicrous take-offs on petty human beings.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes — **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature

• • •

WITH LOVE AND KISSES

Pinky Tomlin, Toby Wing, Kane Richmond. Original story by Al Martin and Sherman Lowe. Direction by Goodwins. Melody Pictures released through Television Pictures.

What with a trite story of a country boy who comes to town and makes good, mediocre acting, no outstanding musical numbers, somewhat ordinary photography and bad lighting effects, this film makes a poor and unentertaining picture. The plot is that the country boy comes to town and is exploited by a crook. He meets and falls in love with the girl who eventually, with the help of a drunken lawyer brother, extricates him from the clutches of the villain and succeeds in securing him suitable reward for the music which he writes. There are preposterous touches such as the insistence of the country lad that he is homesick for his pet cow with the result that the cow is sent for and installed in his swell New York apartment. It would seem that there might be good opportunities for funny comedy but the picture, while ridiculous, is not really funny.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Harmless — **Children, 8 to 12** No appeal

"WOMAN-WISE"

Rochelle Hudson, Michael Whalen, Thomas Beck, George Hassell. Screen play by Ben Markson. Direction by Allan Dwan. 20th Century-Fox.

This is an adequate picture of Class B type showing the struggle for a living by prize fighters who have passed their prime and can no longer make a good showing against younger men. It exposes the cruelty of the proprietors of some sporting clubs who hire these old-timers to fight for a nominal sum, using their names as drawing cards for sports lovers who remember their former prowess. Michael Whalen gives an excellent portrayal of a newspaper sports reporter who crusades against this practice. George Hassell as the crotchety old newspaper owner whose bark is so much worse than his bite, deserves commendation. Thomas Beck as the weakling gives his usual good performance. There is nothing especially original about the story, and the nobility of the reporter who allows himself to be put in the wrong on all occasions and silently accepts the blame for his employer's wayward son is of a type more often seen in the movies than in real life. In so far as the play attempts to expose a real evil it may be said to have value.

Adolescents, 12 to 16	**Children, 8 to 12**
Harmless but little value	Better not

• • •

SHORT SUBJECT

MAGICIAN MICKEY

Walt Disney Studios.

While Mickey is in bed reading "Alice Through the Looking Glass" he falls asleep and follows Alice through the mirror, where inanimate objects come to life. The scene of the playing cards is especially diverting, and the fun goes on till he awakes from his exciting dream. The color of the film is an added joy. Excellent for family and children.

Adolescents, 12 to 16	**Children, 8 to 12**
Excellent	Excellent

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MOTION PICTURE REVIEWS

THE WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY CLUB
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

MARCH, 1937

For practical use we suggest filing bulletins where they may be easily accessible for reference. Films are not released simultaneously over the country. You will need these reviews for constant reference.

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*Clarence
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Don't Tell the Wife
Espionage
*Fair Warning
*The Good Earth
*Green Light
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*When's Your Birthday
*Wings of the Morning
Women of Glamour
You Only Live Once

***Film suitable for family entertainment but not necessarily appropriate for children under 12 or for children unaccompanied by adults.**

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FEATURE FILMS

BORDERLAND

William Boyd, Jimmy Ellison, George Hayes, Stephen Morris, Charlene Wyatt. Based on the story "Bring Me His Ears", by Clarence E. Mulford. Screen play and dialogue by Harrison Jacobs. Direction by Nate Watt. Paramount.

Hopalong Cassidy rides again in an exciting melodrama of the border. *"The Fox"*, a notorious bandit, is carrying on his activities of cattle rustling and robbery on the border of Texas and Mexico. He has eluded all attempts at capture by both the Mexican and the American authorities. As a last resort, *Hopalong Cassidy* is persuaded by the head of the Rangers to pose as an accomplice of the cattle rustlers and in this way lure *"The Fox"* and his gang into his power. His success is not without the usual gun-play and hair-breadth escapes. The desert settings are beautifully photographed, the character portrayals clear-cut, and the story dramatically told, with no love interest motivating the action.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Exciting

• • •

BREEZING HOME

William Gargan, Binnie Barnes, Wendy Barrie, Raymond Walburn. Direction by Milton Carruth. Universal.

Racing stories seldom vary greatly in component parts: there are the enemies of true sport who care only for gambling, those who truly love their horses, a fine horse which is in a carefully-planned "accident" in his first race, has some difficulty getting entered in the second, comes through the great race victoriously, and added to these there is the romance of two people profoundly interested in the horse. With little chance for surprise, the success of the picture depends upon the suitability of the actors and minor quirks of plot. This is a moderately good sport picture which gives William Gargan a chance to make a very likable person of the horse-trainer, *Steve Rowan;* the high-light of the film is his talk on the devotion of a fine horse to his human masters. Wendy Barrie is an attractive young heroine. Raymond Welburn is a fair comedian. Binnie Barnes is effective as the woman who competes for *Steve's* affection. The film has a good tempo, rising to the exciting victory at Santa Anita.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

CLARENCE

Roscoe Karns, Charlotte Wynters, Eugene Pallette, Eleanor Whitney, Johnny Downs, Spring Byington. Direction by George Archainbaud. Paramount.

There are many who will recall Booth Tarkington's *Clarence*, an unassuming character who sometimes seems preternaturally stupid but lives to gain the mastery of mean, suspecting, vexing and malicious individuals. Mistaken for a cab-driver, he is taken home by *Mr. Greene,* to whom he proves invaluable as plumber, piano-

tuner and gardener, meanwhile curing psychological ills of all members of the household until at the end someone has the inspiration to look for his name in "Who's Who". Here is the light, satirical treatment of human foibles for which Tarkington is known. The cast is pleasing if not note-worthy, and the story proceeds in a lively manner with a sprinkling of good dialogue. Wholesome in tone, "Clarence" should make a good family picture.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good
Children, 8 to 12 Insufficient interest

• • •

DANGEROUS NUMBER

Robert Young, Ann Sothern, Reginald Owen, Cora Withspoon. From a story by Leona Dalrymple. Direction by Richard Thorpe. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

A young business man and his temperamental actress wife engage in a succession of squabbles arising from the extreme divergence in their views of life. It is light, improbable farce with an effect of smart, flippant modernity in dialogue, costumes and settings, depending for entertainment value on such ludicrous situations as the heroine in full wedding regalia flying past on a motorcycle. Direction is not entirely smooth, acting is sometimes overdone, but it is the sort of thing which evokes laughter if one is in an irresponsible mood.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No
Children, 8 to 12 No interest

• • •

DEVIL'S PLAYGROUND

Chester Morris, Richard Dix, Dolores Del Rio. Story by Liam O'Flaherty. Direction by Erle C. Kenton. Columbia.

The fear of being trapped became a part of our experience far back in the history of the race. Consequently, a plot which involves a sunken submarine with its trapped men becomes vitally dramatic. A diver in the United States navy believes that his close friend, a chief petty officer, has made advances to his wife. When the officer is trapped in a submarine, the diver refuses to go to his aid but when his wife explains that his suspicions were unfounded, he rushes to the rescue. Suspense is heightened by the delay of the diver in responding to the need for his services, the struggle of the trapped men to sustain life until help reaches them and the difficult conditions under which the rescue is effected. It is a fairly good melodrama.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No
Children, 8 to 12 No

DON'T TELL THE WIFE

Guy Kibbee, Una Merkel, Lynne Overman. From the play "Once Over Lightly" by George Holland. Screen Play by Mark Nat. Direction by Christy Cabanne. R.K.O.

In this light comedy we see crooked promoters ridiculed. The picture commences with a scene showing a convict being released from the penitentiary. He plots a new venture, the promotion of a fake mine, and to lend the deal the earmarks of respectability he persuades a naive and honest gentleman to become president of the company. Guy Kibbee is convincing and entertaining as the lamb who turns the tables on the lions. On the whole however the picture is only mildly amusing. Much of the comedy is overdone and the plot is too absurd to be interesting.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Questionable
Children, 8 to 12 No interest

• • •

ESPIONAGE

Edmund Lowe, Madge Evans, Paul Lucas, Ketti Gallian. From the play by Walter Hackett. Direction by Kurt Neumann. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Kenneth and *Patricia* are secret service agents following the movements of the powerful munitions manufacturer, *Kronsky,* whose endeavors are supposed to be the key to the European war situation. Most of the action takes place on a train to which *Kronsky's* private car is attached, and the pair strike up an acquaintance with the important gentleman because of *Kenneth's* flair for music. A gun goes off, and a charge of dynamite is thrown from a window and detonated, but one is never very much impressed with the seriousness of the affair, for it is all done in a light vein with emphasis on minor anecdotes and encounters which foster the romance of the two spies. Towards the end there is a good deal of harmless fun of the strain usualy employed in musical comedy with Edmund Lowe *(Kenneth)* masquerading in a black mustache and Alpine costume. Action moves along in jaunty fashion, with enough complications to keep one interested if not highly intrigued.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair
Children, 8 to 12 Too intricate a plot

• • •

FAIR WARNING

J. Edward Bromberg, Betty Furness, John Howard Payne, Victor Kilian. From a story by Philip Wylie in the American Magazine. Direction by Norman Foster. 20th Century-Fox.

When a young engineer finds himself a temporary job as swimming instructor at a resort

in Death Valley, little does he guess that he will soon be in the thick of murder and mystery, but so it happens. Two men are killed, and all survivors are placed under suspicion. The story is a little slow in getting under way and never does attain sufficient speed, and the characterizations are sketchy. The casual attitude towards death makes the tale less harrowing and at the same time less convincing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes
Children, 8 to 12 Not objectionable

• • •

THE GOOD EARTH

Paul Muni, Luise Rainer, Walter Connolly, Tilly Losch, Keye Luke, Roland Lui. From the novel by Pearl Buck. Direction by Sidney Franklin. Art direction by Cedric Gibbons. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Storm and drought and all the inimical forces of nature war against the poor Chinese farmer, *Wang,* and his wife *O-Lan* who was once a slave, but an endurance almost beyond the credence of an Occidental and an abounding faith in the deep, rich soil bring the ultimate reward of security and the establishment of a great house. Pearl Buck has a keen understanding of the Chinese people, and everyone who has assisted in the making of the film is imbued with her spirit; Paul Muni and Luise Rainer seem to have entered into the yellow skins of the man *Wang* and his wife. Every religious custom, every detail of dress, habitation and family procedure has been presented with unusual care.

There is little conversation, and perhaps for that reason, one has a strong feeling of elapsed time from beginning to end. The treatment has much in common with the work of Eisenstein; dramatic use of nature, ominous banks of cloud, fierce winds blowing down the wheat fields, pitiless rains, the devastating onslaught of the locusts. A picture which deals with such primitive forces and simple people requires mastery of conception and execution if it is to surmount the level of the sordid, and Sidney Franklin, Cedric Gibbons and all who participated in the making of The Good Earth have risen to the challenge. The whole picture has a haunting spiritual quality that grows even more apparent in retrospect, but dominant in the minds of all who have seen it will linger the exquisite memory of Luise Rainer's *O-Lan.*

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very fine
Children, 8 to 12 Too heavy and too mature

• • •

GREEN LIGHT

Errol Flynn, Anita Louise, Margaret Lindsay, Sir Cedric Hardwick, Walter Abel. From the novel by Lloyd Douglas. Screen play by Milton Krims. Direction by Frank Borzage. Warner Bros.

Lloyd Douglas' books attract many readers. They combine gripping dramatic plots with a very real and satisfying philosophy of living. "The Green Light" is one of his most popular staries and the film is an excellent adaptation, minor changes not affecting the theme. The plot concerns the difficulties confronting a young surgeon who assumes the responsibility of a mistake made by his chief. His career seems ruined but acting upon the council of a saintly Cathedral Dean, who understands the facts of human relationships, he pushes ahead "toward the green light" because of that greater force outside ourselves which drives us on to the solution of life's deepest problems. The cast is excellent and the director has created a sympathetic atmosphere which leaves a memory of sincerity and spirituality as well. It is an exceptional picture, offering entertainment and a rationalized plan for meeting crises.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good
Children, 8 to 12 Yes

• • •

HER HUSBAND'S SECRETARY

Jean Muir, Beverly Roberts, Warren Hull, Joseph Crehan. Screen play by Lillian Hayward. Direction by Frank McDonald. Warner Brothers.

There is probably no more devastating criticism of a picture than that it is dull. Occasionally actors and director rise above a time worn, mediocre plot to salvage something in entertainment value. Unfortunately, though the effort is pronounced, no such feat is accomplished in this instance and the picture remains —dull. If you are still interested in the plot of this triangle drama, the title tells all.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No
Children, 8 to 12 No

• • •

LAND BEYOND THE LAW

To lend a feeling of authenticity General Lew Wallace is introduced in the first part of this story of the early days in New Mexico. The film is a good rousing Western with shooting and fast riding, fine photography and a hero who can sing a cowboy song to warm a maiden's heart. *Chip Douglas* leaves his father's ranch because of undue parental restraint, soon finds himself in a more difficult situation when his employer proves to be a villainous cattle rustler. When *Chip* is elected sheriff, his position becomes really desperate, but in the end good wins over evil as in all true Westerns.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good
Children, 8 to 12 Yes, except for the excitability

THE LAST OF MRS. CHENEY

Powell, Frank Morgan. Direction by Richard Boleslawski. From the play by Frederick Lonsdale. M.G.M.

In spite of the fact that much of the dialogue of the play seems to have been rewritten to suit present-day tempo, the plot itself is conspicuously dated. The opening sequences are amusing and the dialogue at this point spritely, but the last half of the picture suffers from excess verbiage which in no way keeps pace with the progress of the plot. Comparisons are sometimes inevitable and in recalling William Powell's work in more recent films, you will find his role in this one disappointing. Joan Crawford, that ultra-sophisticate, is satisfying, while Frank Morgan adds moments of delightful comedy. The plot is fantastic and absurd but excusable since plausibility is waived in the interests of good fun. Joan Crawford, as the alluring decoy, working for a band of gem thieves, rents a palatial home in London and is accepted by British society. While she is the house guest of an elderly Duchess, she steals a pearl necklace and there ensues a battle of wits between her and the Duchess' guests who are torn between their desire to turn her and her accomplices over to the police and terror lest she reveal the intimate scandals of their lives for publication.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too sophisticated — **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

LOVE IS NEWS

Tyrone Power, Loretta Young, Don Ameche, Slim Summerville. Direction by Tay Garnett. 20th Century-Fox.

A comedy wherein a beautiful socialite turns the burning eye of publicity on an ace reporter who all but withers through the ordeal. Loretta Young is quite delightful as *Tony*, Tyrone Power is spirited and unbeatable as the usual cinema newsgatherer and Don Ameche satisfactory, if cast in a less attractive part than usual. It is jolly, fast moving, well photographed but it suffers mainly from a repetitious quality. Just as there are too many falling grille doors in the jail, an accumulation of minor climaxes becomes tiresome before the plot is two-thirds run—and the principals do an inordinate amount of laughing at their own jokes.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair — **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature

• • •

MAMA STEPS OUT

Guy Kibbee, Alice Brady, Betty Furness, Stanley Mornor. Direction by George B. Seitz. Art direction by Cedric Gibbons. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

With the same central idea as "Dodsworth", the social-climbing American, "Mama Steps Out" is as far removed from that picture as the sub-basement from the pent-house. The scene shifts from ocean liner to Paris and on to the Riviera. While the mother is vainly trying to acquire important Continental friends, the daughter with the resiliency of a rubber ball is being repulsed daily by a crooner from home. The bad characteristics of both Europeans and Americans are magnified; the comedy offers more noise than wit, and very little fresh treatment of old situations is employed to save the play from the realm of mediocrity.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No — **Children, 8 to 12** No

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MAN OF THE PEOPLE

Joseph Calleia, Florence Rice, Thomas Mitchell, Ted Healy. Story and Screen Play by Frank Dolan. Direction by Edwin L. Marin. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

A self-respecting, ambitious young lawyer of Italian parentage is forced by circumstances to join a political gang, and backed by these influential but crooked politicians, he rises to the position of District Attorney. Because of his insistence upon honest law practice he is double-crossed by his backers but his integrity is later rewarded, he attains prominence and wins the woman he loves. The story is not unusual, and there is nothing striking about the manner of its telling. It does however present convincingly the part played by crooked politicians in many American cities. Joseph Calleia is well suited to his role, and the lesser Italian characters are extremely good.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature problem — **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES

Ralph Richardson, Sophie Stewart, Roland Young. Direction by Alexander Korda. Adaptation of story by H. G. Wells. United Artists.

Screen technique has given high comedy value to this adaptation of a rather mediocre short story. As is often the case with fantasy the moving picture proves a more successful vehicle than the printed page. In this story the gods decide to give to one mortal the power to perform miracles withholding only the supreme miracle of transforming human nature. They choose for their experiment a clerk in an English drapery shop, who startles his associates by his fantastic tricks and soon becomes famous for his magic power. Intoxicated by his sudden rise to fame, he attempts too much and is wrecked by his own experi-

ments. The story contains the familiar Wells philosophy lightened and made deliciously humorous by witty lines and excellent acting.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Intersting but mature
Children, 8 to 12 Beyond their comprehension

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MARKED WOMAN

Bette Davis, Humphrey Bogart. Original screen play by Robert Rossen and Abem Finkle. Direction by Lloyd Bacon. First National-Warner Bros.

It is our opinion that the theme is of immense importance in estimating the value of a picture, whether for mere entertainment or for its social significance. There are important contributions to literature, to the stage and to films which show the tragedy, frustrations and ugliness of life but which also indicate some way in which the evils may be alleviated or corrected. We doubt whether "Marked Woman" is of this class. The ending alone, with its absence of sentimental compromise, saves it from utter oblivion. The cast has been well chosen. Bette Davis always adds distinction to any character she plays. The direction is good. But it is a story of the underworld, of the murderous power of a man who controls all the night clubs of a great city, who intimidates his employees and kills anyone who knows too much or who crosses him. The "hostesses" in one bar are paralyzed with fear and their behavior is motivated by this emotion. It is only when an innocent girl is murdered and one of their number is cruelly beaten and disfigured that they appreciate their impotence and become witnesses for the State, thereby incriminating their vicious leader. It is a bitter indictment of the underworld and of the laxity of society's attitude toward the type of entertainment offered in these night clubs, but it leaves the spectator nauseated by its brutality and with no clues to how to help.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 By no means, shocking
Children, 8 to 12 No

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MEN ARE NOT GODS

Miriam Hopkins, Gertrude Lawrence, Sebastian Shaw, Rex Harrison, A. Matthews, Val Gielgud. Direction by Walter Reisch. Alexander Korda-London Films.

Apparently the authors never came to an agreement on the form of drama they were writing, for they fail to establish any semblance of artistic unity. It all begins in fun when a critic's stenographer is implored to alter a critical estimate of a performance of "Othello", but it ends in a burst of melodrama verging on tragedy, when the actor tries to rid himself of his own wife who is playing the part of *"Desdemona"*. The humor is unsuited to American audiences, and one is left with a feeling of regret that a talented cast should have been used in such an ineffectual production.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No
Children, 8 to 12 No

• • •

MEN IN EXILE

Dick Purcell, June Travis, Alan Baxter, Victor Varconi. Direction by John Villiers Farrow. Warner Brothers.

A sinister band of exiled crooks join in a plot to overthrow the government of the little island of Caribo which has given them sanctuary. They urge the newest arrival, *Jimmy Carmody*, to join in the gun-running, but he finds a more desirable occupation in the local hotel until by mischance he too is involved in the imbroglio. It is a second-rate picture, akin to the pulp magazine stories, given whatever merit it possesses by the convincing portrayals of Dick Purcell, June Travis and Alan Baxter in the respective parts of *Jimmy, Sally* the girl he loves, and her weak brother, *Danny*.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Poor
Children, 8 to 12 No

• • •

MICHAEL STROGOFF

Anton Walbrook, Elizabeth Allan, Akim Tamiroff, Margot Grahame, Fay Bainter, Eric Blore, Edward Brophy. From the novel by Jules Verne. Screen play by Mortimer Offner, Anthony Veiller, and Anne Morrison. Direction by George Nicholls, Jr. R.K.O.

This is a regulation romantic story after a time-honored formula. Unusual and interesting backgrounds and the varied types among the minor characters give the film more than ordinary interest. Scenes taken in Bulgaria for the French version and now incorporated in this production create an atmosphere that even the most discriminating choice of location in this country could not have provided. A Russian agent of the Czar carries military secrets to the Grand Duke whose army is about to be attacked by the Tartars. With super-human courage and infinite good luck he completes his dangerous mission at the crucial moment and saves the Grand Duke's forces from annihilation. His adventures are complicated by a seductive woman spy working for the enemy, and a lovely young girl in need of chivalrous protection. Anton Walbrook is a good type for the role of *Strogoff*. Akim Tamiroff is a forceful *Ogareff*, the cruel and crafty Tartar general whose practice of torturing his victims is shown in several altogether too realistic scenes. Fay Bainter, though appearing in only

two or three sequences, is easily the outstanding figure in the cast. Her characterization of *Strogoff's* mother will be remembered long after the rest of the film has been forgotten.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Interesting but somewhat harrowing

Children, 8 to 12
No, too tense

• • •

MIDNIGHT COURT

Ann Dvorak, John Litel, Carlyle Moore, Jr., William Davidson. Direction by Frank McDonald. Warner Bros.

A renegade prosecutor becomes defense attorney for a gang of automobile thieves, adroitly securing acquittals for his clients, until his protege *Bob* becomes a victim of the racketeers. The shock restores a sane attitude towards society and his own obligations to it. John Litel gives a fine performance, other members of the cast are good, while swift action and human interest are maintained by the director. The moral is straight from the shoulder: crime doesn't pay. It is weakened somewhat by compromise with fact in order to secure a happy ending, and one is left with the feeling that if the gangsters had been an nth degree more clever they might have escaped punishment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Better not

Children, 8 to 12
No

• • •

MURDER GOES TO COLLEGE

Roscoe Karns, Marsha Hunt, Lynn Overman, Astrid Allwyn. Direction by Charles Reisner. Paramount.

The picture is a rather involved humorously treated and fast moving detective story. The atmosphere is not altogether wholesome because of the inappropriate mixing of college faculty life with drinking, night clubs and gambling. Comedy consists mostly of the constant smashing of whiskey bottles and wisecracking by a seemingly nitwit detective. Outside of the unravelling of the mystery the picture has little to offer except to fans of Roscoe Karns and Lynn Overman. The casting and acting are adequate, and the directing is passable considering what there was to work with.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Waste of time

Children, 8 to 12
No

• • •

OFF TO THE RACES

Slim Summerville, Jed Prouty, Shirley Deane, Spring Byington, Ann Gillis. Direction by Frank R. Strayer. 20th Century-Fox.

The *Jones* family, who have furnished entertainment for many average American families in recent months, are visited by *Uncle George* in the person of Slim Summerville, a pleasant but persistent "sponge", and his small daughter, *Winnie May,* who is an unmitigated nuisance. Before they know it the *Joneses* are involved in the excitement and financial hazards of the race track, and while all ends well, they come close enough to disaster to be convinced of the evils of gambling. The dialogue is funny and fast, acting good, and one is always interested in the outcome.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Yes

Children, 8 to 12
Yes

• • •

ON THE AVENUE

Dick Powell, Madeleine Carroll, Alice Faye, George Barbier, Alan Mowbray. Direction by Roy Del Ruth. Music and lyrics by Irving Berlin. 20th Century-Fox.

A Dick Powell picture always offers certain things: breezy manners, gay-hearted fun, good songs and peppy dances. Not one of his best, this offers a satisfactory amount of diversion for those who like the type of musical. The Ritz Brothers are grand if you like them, a little tiresome if you don't. The story concerns a youth who is a star in a revue. He enters into a feud with "the richest girl in America", cures her of her snobbish notions and saves her from the pompous explorer to whom she is engaged. Scenes from the revue are as gorgeous as those in some of the big stage productions, such as "As Thousands Cheer" and occasionally as daring, i.e. the back-drop of The Girl From the Police Gazette. Madeleine Carroll and Dick Powell make a good team, particularly in the insouciant companionship of their evening in the hansom, the park and the dining-car restaurant. The songs have melody and swing, and the plot moves along gaily to its romantic conclusion.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Yes

Children, 8 to 12
Fair

• • •

SEA DEVILS

Victor McLaglen, Preston Foster, Ida Lupino, Donald Woods, Helen Flint. Direction by Ben Stoloff. R.K.O.

Doubtless there has been a call for the rollicking "he-man" parts McLaglen used to fill, sometimes as a doughboy, sometimes as a Marine. Now he becomes *"Medals" Malone,* chief petty officer in the Coast Guard, swaggering and bellicose, treated with scant respect by his subordinates, his sterling qualities being his devotion to the service and his love for his pretty daughter *Doris,* whom he tries to shield from the attentions of *Mike O'Shay* (Preston Foster) a younger edition of himself. In addition to stirring scenes aboard a burning ves-

sel, an iceberg and a hurricane-driven yacht, there are enough blows to afford vicarious joy to fight-loving men. Most women will not care for it at all. The influence of the "Code" is seen in suppression of vulgar language and in the type of women presented, Ida Lupino as *Doris* having a lyrical beauty and even Helen Flint as *Sadie, Medal's* inamorata, displaying a certain wistful sweetness. Nevertheless a great deal of emphasis is placed on Malone's unquenchable thirst.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Probably better not — **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

THE SKI CHASE

Hannes Schneider, Leni Reifenstahl. Direction by Arnold Franck. Produced by George Kraska.

A distinct novelty is a film devoted to skiing in the Austrian Tyrol. The picture features Hannes Schneider, famous ski instructor. No news-reel is this with carefully prepared slides, but real skiing across rugged mountain country with jagged rocks half-concealed in the snow to bring about the downfall of the incautious. The picture shows the annual "fox hunt" or ski chase of the little town of St. Anton am Arlberg, Austria. Hannes and Leni are chosen as "foxes", given fifteen minutes start and lead a band of some fifty expert skiers over the mountains of the Hyrol. Two visitors from Hamburg, determined to win the chase against the natives furnish much amusement by their antics on or off skis. The pursuers are foiled by the skilful tactics of the foxes, until finally a small boy cuts across lots and corners the fugitives in a mountain cabin, emerging with their caps in token of victory. The chase shows every imaginable jump, twist and turn known to the sport, with innumerable headlong falls down the steep slopes. Direction and photography are remarable, showing every detail of the ski-runner's art. Many slow motion shots of the leaps and turns end in a cloud of powdery snow, flashing in the sun against a background of beautiful mountain scenery. The picture ends in a wild snowball fight to the accompaniment of a little Tyrolean band.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent — **Children, 8 to 12** Excellent

• • •

STEP LIVELY, JEEVES

Arthur Treacher, Patricia Ellis, Robert Kent, Alan Dinehart, George Givot, Helen Flint. Based on the character "Jeeves" created by P. G. Wodehouse. Screen play by Frank Fenton and Lynn Root. Direction by Eugene Forde. 20th Century-Fox.

Poking fun at even the more grisly aspects of our social life has became a national pastime. In this picture, the machinations of gangsters are exposed in a farcical light. *Jeeves,* a highly respectable English valet and familiar figure of many P. G. Wodehouse stories, is duped into believing that he is the missing heir of Sir Francis Drake. Under the guidance of two crooks, he finances a trip to America where he is eagerly sought by ambitious hostesses. What follows is amusing if your taste runs toward light, rollicking entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Questionable — **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

TIME OUT FOR ROMANCE

Claire Trevor, Michael Whalen, Joan Davis. Direction by Malcolm St. Clair. 20th Century-Fox.

In a second rate, rough and tumble comedy Claire Trevor plays the part of a young woman who starts out to hitch-hike to California, and manages to beat her way by pretending to be the wife of one of the drivers in a motor caravan. She is trying to elude a bridegroom whose interest is solely in a marriage settlement. It is all decidedly nonsensical. Some of it is quite funny and some of it pretty poor.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Undesirable — **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

TWENTY-THREE-A-HALF-HOURS LEAVE

James Ellison, Terry Walker, and Morgan Hill. Adapted from the Saturday Evening Post Story by Mary Roberts Rinehart. Direction by John G. Blystone. Produced by Douglas MacLean. Grand National.

Movie audiences who are not already surfeited with stories based on the playful pranks of soldiers during the World War will be amused by the antics of *Sergeant Gray,* a good looking young smart-aleck, who makes and wins a bet that within a month he will breakfast with the General. The humor is largely slapstick including a tomato throwing bout and a sequence depicting the hero in his underwear racing up and down the stairs of an office building. The horse-play is interspersed with songs by *Sergeant Gray* (James Ellison) and his barrack room playmates. The production romps along without offense and equally without originality, but to many people certain situations are perennially funny.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Amusing — **Children, 8 to 12** Little interest

• • •

WHEN'S YOUR BIRTHDAY?

Joe E. Brown, Marian Marsh. Direction by Harry Beaumont. Warner Bros.

In one of the funniest parts he has ever played Joe E. Brown represents *Dustin Willoughby* who has become so immersed in the study of astrology that every event of life, including marriage, must be prophesied by the stars. When his horoscope reads, "Victory as the moon rises", undaunted, he plunges into the boxing arena against trained fighters, and . . . it would never do to divulge the result. The cast as a whole is pleasing, direction never lags; the film furnishes entertainment for all the family with good-natured jibes at those who take their astrology too seriously.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good — **Children, 8 to 12** Probably

• • •

WINGS OF THE MORNING

Annabella, Leslie Banks, Henry Fonda, Stewart Rome, Irene Vanbrugh. From stories by Donn Byrne. Direction by Harold Schuster. Art direction by W. Ralph Brinton. New World Pictures, Ltd.

Much of the romance and warmth of the Donn Byrne stories has entered into this tale of the Irish Lords of Clontarf, whose fate is swayed by the gypsy race even unto the third generation. The color work is enchanting; there are lovely scenes of the country life in the British isles, gaily-hued sequences of the guard at Buckingham Palace, fascinating views of the races at Epsom Downs, when the famous gypsy horse, *Wings of the Morning*, speeds to victory. The picture boasts a varied and interesting cast, Annabella deserving first place in her dual role of the pretty young gypsy girl and the heroine of the modern tale. While John McCormack's singing is an added feature, his cinema appearance leaves much to be desired. Direction is not as capable as that in the best American pictures; some of the situations are awkward; often the dialogue misses fire, but it is a picture that remains outstanding for sheer beauty and unusual charm.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent — **Adolescents, 12 to 16** Yes

• • •

WOMEN OF GLAMOUR

Melvyn Douglass, Virginia Bruce, Reginald Denny, Pert Kelton. Direction by Gordon Wiles. Columbia.

When critics find the work of a young artist "interesting and well-painted but not inspired", the artist seeks inspiration in the person of a night club entertainer who poses for him. Looking beyond her life of glamour, he discovers true character and tries to develop it—a dangerous experiment, since he is already engaged to be married. The part of the artist is convincingly played by Melvyn Douglass. The others are adequate. The plot, though not startling, has some interest.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Unsuited — **Children, 8 to 12**

• • •

YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE

Sylvia Sidney, Henry Fonda, Barton MacLane, William Gargan. Direction by Fritz Lang. Walter Wanger-United Artists.

Here we find a reduction ad absurdum of the doctrine "There but for the grace of God go I". Because he is young and can love deeply, we are expected to feel a sense of kinship with a criminal who has a not unusual history as a "three time loser", and who although innocent of the crime for which he is sentenced to the electric chair, nevertheless is willing to kill anyone thwarting his effort to escape from prison, and in fact does murder the man who has befriended him. In a further effort to befuddle the wits of the public Henry Fonda, one of the best-liked and most capable of the younger actors, is cast in the part with Sylvia Sidney, always exceptionally good in tragic surroundings, as his young wife whose heroic love transcends all fear of death. For a few, fine acting and direction may compensate for the strain of witnessing a picture which is as dismal from the beginning as the croaking frogs which are oddly enough given as the symbol of imperishable love.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Anti-social influence — **Children, 8 to 12** Decidedly not

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SHORT SUBJECTS

HOW TO BEHAVE

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

A nonsensical group of episodes are based upon a few laws of social etiquette. For example: two ditch-diggers decide to ask Benchley the proper rules for tipping. Good wholesome laughs. Adults and family.

• • •

TRAINED HOOF

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

A delightfully entertaining short explains the training of a race horse from the time he is a colt, his introduction to the saddle, first trials at trotting, intensive speed training for the famous race courses. Interesting for all ages.

LITTLE CHEESER

Harman-izing Cartoon. In color.

Little Cheeser is a mouse whose good and bad intentions follow him around in devilish or saintly form into the house and into the food cupboard until his conscience (or the cat) persuades him to lock his bad self in Dante's Inferno. Done in softly blended colors, this should delight many people. Good for all ages.

• • •

TORTURE MONEY

Educational film.

This is an exposition of the methods used in detecting auto accident insurance frauds. A young federal agent joins the ranks of gangsters, learns that they shake dice to decide which of their number is to be maimed and placed in a car which is subsequently wrecked, and for whom damages are collected. An enlightening picture with a strong lesson. Not for adolescents and children.

HURLING

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Pete Smith Novelty.

The exceedingly rough Irish game of "hurling", somewhat akin to hockey, is treated in slap-stick comedy style and succeeds in being neither funny nor authentic. The use of sport jargon is tiresome, the subject matter interesting but poorly treated. Not recommended for anyone.

• • •

KILLER DOG

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Pete Smith Novelty.

Although the effect would have been improved if people and events had spoken for themselves in place of the narrator, this is an excellent short subject. Based on an actual case in court, a dog, accused of sheep killing, is put on trial for his life, exonerated when a coyote appears as the marauder. It is an appealing drama with wide interest and fine pastoral settings. Family but not for sensitive children.

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THE purpose of this magazine is to provide a handbook of complete and unbiased information concerning current motion pictures. It is designed for those who wish to choose their film entertainment with discretion and is indexed every six months for easy reference. For the guidance of parents the reviews carry evaluations of the films' suitability for children. Reviews are compiled from the detailed comments of university trained women who volunteer their services. The Women's University Club of Los Angeles is incorporated under the laws of California as a non-profit making organization, and the subscription price of the magazine is merely to cover cost of printing and mailing. "Motion Picture Reviews", is fully protected by copyright. Permision to quote in full or in part may be secured by special arrangement with the copyright owners. For information address the Women's University Club.

FEATURE FILMS

CALL IT A DAY

Olivia De Haviland, Ian Hunter, Alice Brady, Roland Young, Freida Inscourt, Bonita Granville. From the play by Dodie Smith. Screen play by Casey Robinson. Direction by Archie Mayo. Warner Bros.

This picture recounts the happenings of one eventful spring day in the lives of the members of a delightful English household. From the moment when the twenty-year-old son bursts into his mother's bedroom and interrupts her reading of the morning paper to complain that his sister has monopolized the bathroom, there is scarcely a minute when someone in the audience is not chuckling with sympathetic amusement. At bed time when the family is at last safely reunited after a day packed with fun and romance and near disaster, no one would venture to state that life even in a normal family is lacking in variety. The play is witty, keenly perceptual and immensely diverting.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

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THE CHEROKEE STRIP

Dick Foran, Jane Bryan, David Carlyle, Helen Valkis. Story by E. E. Repp. Screen play by Joseph Watson and Luci Ward. Direction by Noel Smith. Warner Bros.

Using the theme of the frontier rush (in this case in Oklahoma) as its motif, this western picture drags the spectator through the usual hero-villain feud while the heroine and her precocious small brother complicate the action. Cattle rustling and the familiar problems of westerners are settled by physical violence, but even the gun play is too mechanical a device to rouse the spectators to either pity or horror. The picture has neither freshness of plot nor beauty of setting to commend it, and though it might have served to portray the interesting events in the homesteading of the "Cherokee Strip", it did not make the most of its one opportunity to be different.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Poor **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

DEAD YESTERDAY

Jane Darwell, Sig Rumann, Sally Blane, Thomas Beck, Joan Davis, Wm. Demarest, Geo. Walcott, Wade Boteler, Howard Phillips. Based on a story by Mignon Eberhart. Screen Play by Bess Meredyth, William Conselman and Jerry Cady. Direction by James Tinling. Twentieth Century-Fox.

A hospital is the setting for a murder mystery in comedy vein. A youth, once involved with a gang of bank robbers and having served a prison sentence, is on probation and is trying to go straight when he inadvertently encounters the same gang. To escape from a compromizing situation, he seeks refuge in the hospital where his sister is a nurse, and with her help and that of an interne, he evolves a unique plan of dodging the police as well as the criminals who are out gunning for him. Several patients, the surgeon, the superintendent and even a corpse take part in the exciting events that finally lead to the satisfactory solution of a murder. The tenser moments are relieved by the blunders of a stupid detective and the antics of a ganster posing as a patient. The picture is sufficiently entertaining, if one likes the type.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

FAMILY AFFAIR

Lionel Barrymore, Cecilia Parker, Eric Linden, Mickey Rooney, Spring Byington, Julie Haydon. From the play "Skidding" by Aurania Rouverol. Screen play by Kay Van Riter. Direction by George B. Seitz. M.-G.-M.

In endeavoring to balk the schemes of dishonest engineers who have a contract to build an aqueduct through the small town where he lives, *Judge Hardy* clashes with political enemies. How the situation reacts upon each member of his family and affects his domestic life is shown in a series of entertaining incidents. Lionel Barrymore as *Judge Hardy* heads an exceptionally well chosen cast. The story is not unusual but it deals sympathetically with wholesome, real people whose problems are the familiar ones of every day life.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

GIRL LOVES BOY

Eric Linden, Cecilia Parker Dorothy Peterson, Roger Imhof. Original story by Karl Brown and Minton Smith. Screen play by Duncan Mansfield and Carroll Graham. Direction by Duncan Mansfield. Grand National.

This is a romantic comedy of the horse-and-buggy days. It deals with the difficulties of growing up, with a boy almost ruined by too much money, with a girl consumed with a love for music and a real talent for the piano, with their conflicts, and finally the unselfish love that unites the two. The sweet and simple home life of a financially impoverished home

is emphasized in a tender, almost sentimental fashion, but the generally well sustained scenes and uniformly good acting of both the children and the older players save the picture from mawkishness. The backgrounds of small town life are carefully detailed.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good — **Children, 8 to 12** Good

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HEAD OVER HEELS IN LOVE

Jessie Matthews, Louis Borell, Robert Flemyng, Whitney Bowine. Based on the play by Francois de Crvisset. Adapted by Fred Thompson and Dwright Sayer. Songs by Gordon and Revel. Direction by Connie Hale.

Jessie Matthews is very pretty. She dances well, sings charmingly and is a good actress. But this film is too heavy a load for her slender shoulders. Extremely bad backgrounds detract from the dances, the story is poor and the leading men will never set feminine American hearts to palpitating.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Harmless—but tiresome — **Children, 8 to 12** No interest

• • •

THE KING AND THE CHORUS GIRL

Fernand Gravet, Joan Blondell, Edward Everett Horton, Alan Mowbray, Mary Nash, Jane Wyman, Luis Alberni. Original screen play by Norman Krasna and Groucho Marx. Direction by Mervyn LeRoy. Warner Brothers.

In this extremely sophisticated satirical comedy, an habitually intoxicated ex-monarch of a mythical kingdom is rehabilitated by a piquant American chorus girl who refuses to be awed by his rank. In spite of the appalling consumption of alcohol demanded by his role, Fernand Gravet, who plays the king, is probably destined to become a new screen idol. The story is adroitly handled in the continental manner and will amuse those whom it does not disgust.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No — **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

LOST HORIZON

Ronald Coleman, Jane Wyatt, Edward Everett Horton, John Howard, Thomas Mitchell, Margo, Isabel Jewell, H. B. Warner, Sam Jaffe. Screen play by Robert Riskin. From the novel by James Hilton. Direction by Frank Capra. Columbia.

"Lost Horizon," the novel, expounds a philosophical thought combining its philosophy with subtle humour, adventure, and a rather unusual degree of suspense. It describes a miraculously fertile valley in the inaccessible frozen mountains of Tibet and a mysterious lamasery called "Shangri-la", far removed from the strife of world affairs, where life is devoted to contemplation and human existence is prolonged far beyond the usual span. If from reading the book, one has imagined this lamasery as symbolic of everyman's land of hearts desire, seeing it pictured on the screen is apt to destroy a great deal of its symbolic quality. On the other hand, to one who has not read the book, the fantastic unreality of such an ideal spot is not easily conveyed in pictures. Judged solely as a motion picture, "Lost Horizon" is a fascinating adventure story with an unusually interesting theme, tremendously beautiful scenic effects and some of the most spectacular snow pictures ever photographed. The plot is changed in a number of details from that of the novel, and to many people it will not seem to have been improved by the changes. Five persons, four men and a woman, are kidnaped in a giant aeroplane and grounded near "Shangri-la". Their adventures in the plane, the strange life in the lamasery, the reactions of the different characters to their odd situation and the explanation of the kidnaping are absorbingly interesting. The dominant character is *Conway,* an English diplomat whose adventures in the war have convinced him of the failure of civilization to provide a satisfactory life. The most thrilling scene occurs when a party of mountain climbers is swept off the trail by an avalanche; the most interesting is *Conway's* audience with the *High Lama* when the tradition of "Shangri-la" is revealed to him. A great deal of critical comment has been written upon the philosophical message in the theme, but to one who is not already familiar with the underlying thought, the pictorial effects will probably be more impressive than *Conway's* search for an ideal existence.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Interesting but mature — **Children, 8 to 12** Too long and too mature

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THE MAN BETRAYED

Eddie Nugent, Kay Hughes, Lloyd Hughes. An original script by Torell and Stuart McGowan. Direction by John H. Aner. Reliable Pictures.

Again an innocent man is tricked by crooks and "railroaded" to prison for murder. He escapes en route by the curious coincidence of being handcuffed to a prisoner who is rescued by confederates. This gang provides a refuge for our hero until he and his brother, a priest, can prove his innocence and incriminate the guilty parties. The plot is melodramatic and hackneyed, but it is not without some interesting phases. The priest is likeable, human and worthy of respect, although his influence

in the gang is almost too good to be true and these lawbreakers are pictured as rather more big hearted and kindly than experience would seem to indicate. It is a picture which because of its drama and humor will appeal more to adolescence than to maturity, yet the ethics involved require adult evaluation.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended **Children, 8 to 12** No

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THE MAN WHO FOUND HIMSELF

John Beal, Joan Fontaine, Philip Huston, Jane B. Walsh, George Irving. From the story "Wings of Mercy" by Alice F. Curtis. Direction by Lew Landers. R.K.O.

If it were not for misjudged doctors and emergency operations many of the current films could not have been written. An unimportant addition to the cycle is "The Man Who Found Himself". Jim Stanton, surgeon by profession, reckless aviator by preference, happens to wreck a plane when another man's wife is his companion, and the resultant scandal causes the hospital board to suspend him. He leaves the hospital in a mood of resentment and hikes to California where first as hobo, then as aeroplan mechanic, he lives incognito until a coincidence restores him to the medical profession. The story differs from others of its genre in that the young doctor allows his disgrace to warp his attitude towards his profession, and it is necessary for him to "find himself" before his regeneration is complete. That the film misses distinction is largely due to the fact that the doctor's regeneration is brought about more through external causes than by strength of character.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable **Children, 8 to 12**

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MAYTIME

Jeannette MacDonald, Nelson Eddy, John Barrymore, Herman Bing, Paul Porcasi, Guy Bates Post, Don Cassack Chorus. Based on the play by Sida Johnson Young and the stage production by Sigmund Romberg. Adaptation by Noel Langley. Direction by Robert Z. Leonard, M.G.M.

Maytime has a lilt and an infectious charm. The exquisite costumes, which are especially becoming to Miss MacDonald, the elaborate and varied sets, and the almost continuous music to suit all tastes, make one willing to overlook the sentimentality of the story. The play opens with an old lady telling her life's story to a young girl who is about to give up marriage in favor of a musical career. We then see the older woman as she appeared in her glorious youth, singing before Louis Napoleon and creating a sensation which leads to her success as an operatic star. That night the man who had discovered her and directed her progress, proposes marriage, and her gratitude causes her to accept him. Immediately afterward she meets a younger man with whom she falls in love. The moral, if any is intended, is that gratitude alone is not a sound basis for matrimony and that sacrifice of love for a career does not insure happiness. However, the plot is not the essential phase of the picture. Music is. The score, arranged by Herbert Stothart, includes excerpts from Myerbeer's "Les Huguenots", flashes from "The Bohemian Girl", "Tristan", "Martha", "Faust", and "Lucia"; "Sweethearts" by Sigmund Romberg; "Les Filles de Cadiz" by Leo Delibes; European folk songs and many novelties. Music lovers will find certain anachronisms in the presentation of the various operas and, some will object to the unconventional rendition of Tchaikowsky's "Fifth Symphony" as a Russian opera sung in French. But Miss MacDonald and Mr. Eddy are ideally cast, and their voices are superbly recorded. John Barrymore, in an ungrateful role, gives a surpassingly fine performance. The production justifies popular approval and should appeal to all ages.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

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MOUNTAIN JUSTICE

Josephine Hutchinson, George Brent, Guy Kibbee, Mona Barrie, Robert Barrat, Margaret Hamilton, Fuzzy Knight, Robert McWade. Original screen play by Norman Reilly Raine and Luci Ward. Direction by Michael Curtiz. Warner Brothers.

In this grim melodrama of life among the ignorant mountaineers of the South, cruelty and mob hysteria are directed against a young woman who has tried to break away from the unreasoning domination of her father. The girl has returned home from "outside" where she has learned a little nursing, and she is helping the old country doctor. Her father chooses to misconstrue her motives and attempts to discipline her with a rawhide whip. Conflict follows conflict, the older generation's prejudicies against a new generation's conception of justice. This theme has been used numerous times in much the same setting and always brings shudders of horror from audiences but when well presented, as it is in this picture, it is excellent material for melodrama. Comedy relief is in the capable hands of Margaret Hamilton and Fuzzy Knight. Robert Barrat is most convincing as the brutal father.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too much brutality **Children, 8 to 12** Impossible

NANCY STEELE IS MISSING

Victor McLaglen, Walter Connolly, Peter Loore, June Lang, Robert Kent, Shirley Deane. Based on a story by Charles Francis Coe. Screen play by Gene Fowler and Hal Long. Direction by George Marshall. 20th Century-Fox.

A study in violent reactions is presented by Victor McLaglen in the role of *Danny O'Neill,* a man whose only means of self expression is to start a fight but whose conduct, paradoxically ,is motivated by aversion to war and the desire to hurt a munition manufacturer. In his frantic hatred he kidnaps the man's baby daughter. The plot however is not particularly concerned with the solving of the kidnaping mystery. It follows *Danny* to prison where he is sent for assaulting a policeman and where he is kept for a long term because, again, through his beligerency, he is involved in an attempted prison break. His final softening through his love for the young girl who believes he is her father, strikes a sentimental chord in an otherwise consistent characterization. Peter Loore gives another of his brilliant performances as the crafty murderer who is *Danny's* cell mate. The film is interesting, but one comes away feeling bruised by the sight of so much brutality and wondering why the producers saw fit to release a picture in which a kidnaper is shown in a sympathetic light and permitted to escape adequate punishment for his hideous crime.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No — **Children, 8 to 12** No

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NATION AFLAME

Noel Madison, Lila Lee. Direction by Victor Halperin. Story by James Dixon. Treasure Pictures-Edward Halperin.

Well intentioned but poorly executed, "Nation Aflame" attempts to point the way to better citizenship. It is evidently designed to unmask so-called patriotic organizations run by racketeers, but in spite of the obvious sincerity of the author the incidents are so forced and the lines so bombastic that the picture fails to convey its message.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable — **Children, 8 to 12** No

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NOBODY'S BABY

Patsy Kelly, Lyda Roberti, Lynne Overman, Robert Armstrong, Rosina Lawrence, Don Alvarado. Direction by Gus Meins. Hal Roach Production.

Two girls in training at a hospital decide to give temporary shelter to a very new baby while the baby's mother is busy trying to get the father to acknowledge their marriage. As various humorous complications develop, the baby is passed from person to person until no one seems quite sure where the child belongs and everyone is suspected of being a parent. The comedy proceeds along well known lines but nevertheless is absurdly amusing in spots. The baby is a good-natured paragon of infant virtues.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable — **Children, 8 to 12** No interest

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OUTCAST

Warren William, Karen Morley, Lewis Stone, Christian Rub. From a story by Frank R. Adams. Screen play by Doris Mallou and Dore Schary. Direction by Robert Florey. Paramount.

Unjust persecution of a doctor is more plausibly treated here than in several recent films concerning the medical profession. Hounded out of the city, the doctor goes to a backwoods town where with the aid of a kindly old lawyer who has acquired a deep understanding of human motives, he gains a new foot-hold on life. The first part of the picture is an interesting study of the impulses and ambitions of the three main characters and others in the small town, but towards the end it suddenly bursts into a blood and thunder melodrama with an attempted lynching. Altogether it is only fairly good.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No — **Children, 8 to 12** No

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PERSONAL PROPERTY

Jean Harlow, Robert Taylor, Reginald Owen, Una O'Conner, Henrietta Crossman. Direction by W. S. Van Dyke. M.-G.-M.

In order to become acquainted with an American girl who has attracted his interest, the black sheep of an English family has himself appointed sheriffs officer and moves into the young woman's home with authority to remain there until she has paid a debt. Obviously the situation has comic possibilities, and these are used to fairly good advantage by Robert Taylor and Jean Harlow. Mr. Taylor with his American accent is not a convincing English gentleman, and Miss Harlow makes an unnecessarily shallow and petulant character of the girl. The film is only moderately entertaining.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended — **Children, 8 to 12** No

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QUALITY STREET

Katharine Hepburn, Franchot Tone, Eric Blore, Fay Bainter, Cora Witherspoon, Estelle Winwood, Florence Lake, Helena Grant. From the play by J. M. Barrie. Screen play by Mortimer Offner and Allan Scott. Direction by George Stevens. Pandro S. Berman Production. R.K.O.

After the turbulent, emotional films that too often usurp the screen, "Quality Street" is like a dainty miniature in a gallery of battle scenes, but its daintiness does not rob it of virility, and it is neither too pastel tinted nor too whimsical to appeal to modern taste. Great credit is due to the director and to the excellent cast for preserving the spirit and humor of the original play. Characters who by present day standards might easily have seemed absurd are never exaggerated to the point of losing reality. *Phoebe* and *Susan Throssel,* who lived in 1805 and were perhaps even more ladylike than other spinsters of the period, are made delightfully human in the persons of Katharine Hepburn and Gay Bainter, and *Phoebe's* gentle romance with the dashing *Captain Brown* is as touching as any modern love story. The play will delight women who will share *Phoebe's* resentment against her suitor when, upon returning from the war, he notes her added years, completely forgetting that time has dealt no more gently with him. Special commendation should be given to Franchot Tone for his handling of a difficult role. With exactly the right blending of humor and sympathy he creates a *Captain Brown* who, without being priggish, is a perfect balance wheel for the capricious *Phoebe.*

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Very good, particularly for girls

Children, 8 to 12
Little interest

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REVOLUTIONISTS

V. V. Shchukin, N. P. Khmelev, K. I. Tarasova, V. P. Maretskaya, N. S. Plotnikov.

Direction by Vera Stroyera. Soviet film.

This unusual film presents a fictionized version of the Russian revolution during the decade preceding the fall of the Imperial government. Interwoven with the historical details are the loves of *Sofia,* a wealthy girl who joins the radical movement and becomes one of its leaders. The story opens with a student uprising in the classic halls of the Imperial Russian University. In sharp contrast is a police raid on a group of conspirators in a poverty-stricken quarter of the city. The scenes shift rapidly from parks and buildings of old St. Petersburg to the frozen wastes of Siberia and then to deadly street fighting in Moscow. A pathetic incident occurs when women carrying their icons march to plead with the Czar for relief, confident that the "Little Father" will help them, only to be fired on by troops. Impressive is the singing of the "Internationale" by rough-looking deputies to a labor congress. The production is superior technically to most of the recent Russian films. The story is moving and interesting but suffers from excess of material and bad continuity. It is undoubtedly designed to create sympathy for the Russian workers in their long struggle for freedom. It is well cast and skilfully acted.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Needs adult discount

Children, 8 to 12
No interest

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SAN QUENTIN

Pat O'Brien, Humphrey Bogart, Ann Sheridan, Barton McLane, Joseph Sawyer. Screen play by Peter Milne and Humphrey Cobb. Story by Robt. Tasker and John Bright. Direction by Lloyd Bacon. First National.

The very presence of men who are in conflict with the world and with themselves gives to prison pictures their dramatic force. Whether or not one enjoys the spectacle of derelict humanity, the rebellion of individuals against accepted morality is provocative of thought and emotionaly stirring. "San Quentin" has one aspect that might label it as constructive entertainment. It attempts to show the necessity for disinguishing between first offenders and repeaters in the disciplinary systems in force in penitentiaries. Pat O'Brien appears as *Captain Jameson,* a man used to training men in the army and appointed yard Captain at San Quentin because of his ability to enforce strict discipline while retaining the respect of the men under him. The former yard Captain, demoted to make way for *Jameson* and hated by all the prisoners, is the trouble maker who stands between *Jameson's* projected reforms and the skeptical prison board. The atmosphere is extremely realistic, and the usual thrills are abundantly provided by the spectacular escape of two prisoners from the road gang. The film is robbed of some of its sincerity by the romance between *Jameson* and the sister of one of the prisoners. Why movie criminals have to have beautiful, innocent and well-bred sisters who ensnare the affections of officers of the law and lead them into undiplomatic indiscretions is known only to scenario writers. Pat O'Brien has not the bearing of an army captain but his acting is unaffected and others are appropriately cast.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Unsuitable

Children, 8 to 12
No

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SEVENTH HEAVEN

Simone Simon, James Stewart, Jean Hersholt, Gregory Ratoff, Gale Sondergaard, J. Edward Bromberg, John Qualen. Adapted from the stage play by John Golden. Screen play by Melville Baker. Direction by Henry King. 20th Century-Fox.

The theme of an enduring love that makes home a heaven and brings God to those who trust, is full of beauty, strength and romance in this version of an inspiring stage play. In

the background, Paris during the World War, are sorrow, misery and want, but the love of *Chico*, the street sweeper, and *Diane*, the little waif, is so far above material surroundings that there is no touch of sordidness to mar the poignant beauty of their unselfish devotion to each other and their belief in the goodness of life. Simone Simon is an appealing *Diane* though lacking the emotional depth necessary for her role. James Stewart as *Chico* and Jean Hersholt as *Father Chevillion* are eminently satisfactory. Those who cherish the memory of an earlier version may be disappointed in this one, but for others it provides rare enjoyment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Delightful **Children, 8 to 12** Mature

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THE SOLDIER AND THE LADY

Reviewed in the March issue under the title "Michael Strogoff".

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SWING HIGH, SWING LOW

Carole Lombard, Fred MacMurray, Charles Butterworth, Harvey Stephens, Jean Dixon, Dorothy Lamour. Direction by Mitchell Leisen. Paramount.

Swing music accompanies a "he's-my-man" type of story in the film which is based on the stage play "Burlesque". In the beginning the setting is Panama with its tropical atmosphere of heat and untidiness. Here *Maggie*, a stranded chorus girl, meets *Skid*, a down-and-out trumpet player, and together they find employment as entertainers in a cheap night club. Later the scene shifts to New York where *Maggie* finds *Skid* in an alcoholic daze and sobers him up in time to appear on a radio programme. The sordidness of the plot is alleviated by Charles Butterworth and Jean Dixon in comedy parts, elaborate music and dance sequences in New York and Paris cafes, and Carole Lombard, who as *Maggie* has a chance to speak the kind of clever lines by which girls of the *Maggie*'s type are supposed to hide their breaking hearts. Because of its popular cast the film will probably get its share of patronage though it has little else to recommend it.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Unsuitable **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

THAT I MAY LIVE

Rochelle Hudson, Robert Kent, J. Wedward Bromberg, Jack LaRue. Screen play by Bon Markson and William Conselman. Direction by Allan Dwan. 20th Century-Fox.

This is one of a cycle of pictures dealing with the problems of an ex-prisoner who wants to go straight. The hero is a weak victim of adverse circumstances, who, as portrayed by Robert Kent, will touch the hearts of sentimental audiences by his appealing personality. Immediately upon his release from prison, he falls in with his old gang, and it is only by the miraculous understanding of a young woman whom he tries to hold up that he is saved from returning to a life of crime. The story will entertain those to whom an attractive leading man, suspense and a love story are more important than originality or sound reasoning.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

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THAT MAN'S HERE AGAIN

Hugh Herbert, Mary Maguire, Tom Brown, Joseph King. Story by Ida A. R. Wylie. Screen play by Lillie Hayward. Direction by Louis King. First National.

Playing benefactor to a pair of young lovers is an unexpected role for an alcoholic old skalawag, and acting as godfather to an infant is still more surprising. However after this eccentric person kisses a cab horse in the first few feet of the film, one should be prepared for something unusual. The picture is a comedy romance with about equal portions of Hugh Herbert being funny as an amiable old reprobate and Tom Brown and Mary Mcguire being youthfully appealing in a naive boy and girl romance. The baby seems to be in the picture partly for the sake of the plot but mostly because a great many people will enjoy his smile and his well timed gurgles. "That Man's Here Again" is a strange mixture of hokum and sophistication but it combines the two rather entertainingly.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

WHEN LOVE IS YOUNG

Virginia Bruce, Kent Taylor, Walter Brennan, Greta Meyer, Christian Rub. Direction by Hal Mohr. Universal.

Wanda Werner is a shy country girl, snubbed by her classmates because of her retiring nature and because her parents are foreign born. Her uncle, delightfuly portrayed by Walter Brennan, insists upon taking her to New York to study for an operatic career. There she finds only discouragement until a publicity agent for a theatrical booking office uses her in a stunt to further his own ends. She becomes a glamorous success. The story is unconvincing but has, withal, a goodly supply of sweetness and family affection, which makes it fairly entertaining.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair **Children, 8 to 12** Little interest

WHEN YOU'RE IN LOVE

Grace Moore, Cary Grant, Aline McMahon, Henry Stephenson. Direction by Robert Riskin. Columbia.

Grace Moore is charmingly vivacious and in excellent voice in her latest screen appearance. As *Louise Fuller,* an opera star, she is first seen in Mexico awaiting her quota number for a passport to the United States. When the passport is delayed she arranges to marry an American with the understanding that she will divorce him as soon as she is safely across the border. At this juncture it is clear to the audience that a romance is brewing. While many situations are absurdly farcical, a good cast, amusing dialogue, colorful settings and Miss Moore's varied songs make the picture thoroughly enjoyable.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Entertaining

Children, 8 to 12
Little interest except in music

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WHITE BONDAGE

Jean Muir, Gordon Oliver, Howard Phillips, Joseph King, Harry Davenport, Virginia Brishac. Original story and Screen Play by Anthony Coldeway. Direction by Nick Grinde. Warner Brothers.

Growing class hatred is one of America's greatest problems today. Handled expertly and without undue exaggeration, it offers a moving theme for pictures, but "White Bondage" treats the subject with no suggestion that in the end both Capital and Labor can legitimately have the same objectives. A picture of this type only adds fuel to the growing bitterness fostered in many quarters, true as the facts may be in certain instances. It is a story of the cotton belt. A family of "share croppers" are bound in economic slavery through the dishonesty of a plantation owner. The film arouses sympathy for the workers and bitter antagonism toward the employers. It is melodramatic, brutal and at times unbelievable, but is vividly acted by an excellent cast.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
No

Children, 8 to 12
No

SHORT SUBJECTS

SERVANT OF THE PEOPLE

Two reel feature. Produced and released by M.-G.-M.

Here is a short photoplay which will rate with any feature on a program. It pictures the critical period immediately following the Revolutionary War when strife and state jealousies almost destroyed the "Confederation", so recently freed, which will interest any audience and which is made a central government a necessity and visualizes the able men who labored during the summer of 1787 to effect a compromise resulting in the Constitution which has served the United States so admirably for 150 years. It is a timely subject and it has been stirringly dramatized. No one can fail to be moved by the drama, or impressed by the exceptional detail of the production. The cast is unusually fine. Settings are authentic and the characters splendidly delineated. Benjamin Franklin is pictured with rare skill, and his tactful influence in bringing the statesmen to an agreement is an illuminating feature. It is a subject which wil interest any audience and which is invaluable for teaching purposes. An excellent study guide prepared by Ernest D. Lewis, President, department of Secondary Education, National Education Association, is available through Educational and Recreational Guides Inc., 138 Washington Street, Newark, N. J.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Very fine.

Children, 8 to 12
Good

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THE purpose of this magazine is to provide a handbook of complete and unbiased information concerning current motion pictures. It is designed for those who wish to choose their film entertainment with discretion and is indexed every six months for easy reference. For the guidance of parents the reviews carry evaluations of the films' suitability for children. Reviews are compiled from the detailed comments of university trained women who volunteer their services. The Women's University Club of Los Angeles is incorporated under the laws of California as a non-profit making organization, and the subscription price of the magazine is merely to cover cost of printing and mailing. "Motion Picture Reviews", is fully protected by copyright. Permission to quote in full or in part may be secured by special arrangement with the copyright owners. For information address the Women's University Club.

FEATURE FILMS

ANOTHER DAWN

Kay Francis, Errol Flynn, Ian Hunter, Frieda Inescourt, Herbert Mundin. Original screen play by Laird Doyle. Direction by William Dieterle. Warner Bros.

From the first reel, the plot of this story is apparent. It is a triangle romance in which a woman marries for companionship, believing that after the tragic death of her fiance, she will never love again. Arriving with her English soldier husband at an Arabian desert post, she finds immediately the man in whom she sees the reincarnation of all the virtues of her first love. Since all persons concerned are honorable, it is obvious that the husband's inevitable sacrifice is all that is needed to unite the lovers and provide a satisfactory ending to the picture. Gowns by Orry-Kelly preserve the tradition of Miss Francis' ultra-fashionable appearance. Dialogue intended to be philosophical is artificial and stilted and prevents the actors from appearing at their best. Only the background of the Arabian desert, beautifully photographed by Tony Gaudio, makes "Another Dawn" worth seeing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

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AS GOOD AS MARRIED

Doris Nolan, John Boles, Walter Pidgeon, Alan Mowbray, Tala Birrell. Direction by Edward Buzzell. Universal.

Drew, a successful architect, proposes a marriage of convenience to his secretary to save himself from income taxes in the higher brackets and from breach of promise suits. John Boles is at a disadvantage in a silly role which he endeavors to make supportable, while Walter Pidgeon, as a normal, attractive youth, profits by comparison. It is frivolous comedy which, while rather weak ethically, is given entertainment value by clever dialogue, smooth direction, good acting by many members of the cast and superlative settings in the modern manner.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too sophisticated

Children, 8 to 12 No

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CAFE METROPOLE

Loretta Young, Tyrone Power, Adolphe Menjou, Gregory Ratoff, Charles Winninger. Original story by Gregory Ratoff. Screen story by Jacques Deval. Direction by Edward H. Griffith. 20th Century-Fox.

Romance and rascality, gambling debts and mistaken identities, complicate the plot of this suavely entertaining comedy. Adolphe Menjou as *M. Victor* of the Cafe Metropole possesses a quick wit that serves him better than honesty, and when he gets the upper hand over an American youth who cannot pay his gambling debts, he sees immediately an opportunity to use blackmailing tactics to induce the young man to carry out a plot by which he hopes to raid the pocket-book of an American millionaire. The millionaire has a daughter, and the young man falls in love. The original plans are altered but *M. Victor* collects. So fascinating are the methods of the charming *M. Victor* that we almost overlook the fact that he in no way suffers from his rascality. Extravagantly beautiful sets, clever dialogue and excellent acting help to make the picture immensely entertaining.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

• • •

CALIFORNIA STRAIGHT AHEAD

John Wayne, Louise Latimer, Robert McWade, Theodore von Eltz, Tully Marshall, Emerson Tracy. Original story by Herman Boxer. Screen play by Scott Darling. Direction by Arthur Lubin. Universal.

A clean and wholesome portrayal of an interesting and very American theme, the competition between the railroads and the trucking industry for the freight business of the nation. Audiences who are not too critical in the matter of plot and acting, will like the efforts of two young men to win their way as pioneers in a worthwhile enterprise and will be thrilled by the close-ups of a train and a caravan of trucks racing through mountain passes, snowdrifts and falling timber.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Exciting

• • •

CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS

Freddie Bartholomew, Spencer Tracy, Lionel Barrymore, Melvyn Douglas, Charley Grapewin, Mickey Rooney, John Carradine, Jack LaRue. Screen play by John Lee Mahin, Marc Connelly, and Dale Van Every. Direction by Victor Fleming. M.G.M.

"Captains Courageous" is one of the few pictures which can be said to be completely satisfactory in theme, philosophy, acting, direction and technical detail. It cannot fail to move any spectator, young or old. It is high in entertainment value, a true tale of adventure in a realistic setting, and it tells a human story of character achievement. Freddie Bartholomew plays the role of a spoiled but neglected son of a rich father. The boy believes that his father's money can buy anything but, after an ignominious failure to win the respect of his schoolmates, he has to leave school. Accidentally lost overboard from an ocean liner, he is picked up by fishermen on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, and when no offer of money

will cause the captain of the vessel to turn back to the shore with him, he is forced to spend three months with the rough but sterling seamen from whom he learns different values and a new point of view. The picture is beautifully done. Freddie Bartholomew is exceptionally fine as the poor little rich boy, and his metamorphosis is moving and convincing. Lionel Barrymore and Spencer Tracy are particularly good, and Melvyn Douglas, as the boy's father, gives a fine performance. The spectacular background of the sea, the rough hardships and dangers of the life, are particularly interesting and provide a unique seting for a splendid story.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent **Children, 8 to 12** Excellent

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THE CASE OF THE STUTTERING BISHOP

Donald Woods, Ann Dvorak, Anne Nagel, Linda Perry. Screen play by Kenneth Gamet and Don Ryan. Story by Erle Stanley Gardner. Direction by William Clemens. Warner Brothers.

When an Australian bishop comes to America to help an heiress recover her inheritance, *Perry Mason* unravels another puzzling mystery. A great many characters complicate the rather involved plot. This is only a fair addition to the Erle Stanley Gardner "case" series.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

CHARLIE CHAN AT THE OLYMPICS

Warner Oland, Katherine de Mille, Pauline Moore, Allan Lane, Keye Luke, C. Henry Gordon, John Eldredge, Layne Tom, Jr. Original story by Paul Burger, based on the character created by Earl Der Biggers. Direction by H. Bruce Humberstone. 20th Century-Fox.

When a newly invented mechanical device for operating an airplane is stolen from the United States Government, *Charlie Chan* is delegated to trace the thieves to Berlin where they are supposed to be concealing themselves among the crowds attending the Olympic games. This is a typical *Charlie Chan* picture, with the addition of views of the Olympics. It is most agreeable light entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good **Children, 8 to 12** Mature

• • •

DANCE, CHARLIE, DANCE

Stuart Erwin, Jean Muir, Glenda Farrell, Allen Jenkins. From the play "Butter and Egg Man" by George S. Kaufman. Direction by Frank McDonald. First National.

Stuart Erwin is cast as a greenhorn who arrives in New York City with twenty thousand dollars. He wants to invest in a theatrical company wih the idea of doubling his money so that he can buy the hotel in his home town. The path by which he approaches his goal is beset with many dangers of which he is oblivious, but his preposterous financial ventures always turn out to his advantage. It is a lively picture with many amusing incidents, the part of *Andy* being well suited to the talents of Stuart Erwin. Dances, music and lyrics have been added to the stage version of Kaufman's play making this a musical film with less importance attached to the plot.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Not sufficient interest

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ELEPHANT BOY

Sabu, W. E. Holloway, Walter Hudd, Alan Jeayes, Bruce Gordon. Based on "Toomai of the Elephants" by Rudyard Kipling. Screen play by John Collier. Direction by Robert Flaherty. Photography by Osmond Borradaile. London Films-United Artists.

We have all loved Kipling's *Jungle Book* in childhood days, and it is an unexpected joy to find his India again, not weakened with the passing years but pulsating with warmth and beauty, even more remarkable than we remembered it. There are the crumbling walls of majestic temples, little towns with shadow-flecked streets, and beyond them trails leading to the jungle which is almost like a presence, luxuriant, brooding, mysterious, filled with echoing voices. One never has the objective point of view characteristic of many pictures of far-off lands, for one rides again with little *Toomai* on *Kalag Nag* to the vast assemblage of elephants who perform their mystical dance in the full of the moon. He is a wonderful child, this little bronze Sabu, this scrap of humanity who sits astride the head of a gigantic elephant and holds him in his sway. And we are deeply touched by his sorrows and his high ambition, for he bears with him the appeal of universal childhood, irrespective of race or hue of skin. As the Sahib *Petersen,* Walter Hudd upholds the British tradition of fair dealing with the natives, sportsmanship and cool courage which for a long time proved successful in remote parts of the Empire. Again Robert Flaherty has achieved distinction in his field of direction; perhaps this is the finest work of his career; certainly one has the feeling that the denizens of the jungle as well as the people are behaving as they would if the camera were a thing unknown. It is a picture to delight children who are old enough not to be frightened by a fierce tiger and the sight of a funeral pyre, and one that older people will enjoy and long remember.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Splendid **Children, 8 to 12** Yes, for most of them

FIFTY ROADS TO TOWN

Don Ameche, Ann Sothern, Slim Summerville, Jane Darwell, John Qualen, Douglas Fowley, Allan Lane, Alan Dinehart, Stepin Fetchit. Screen play by George Marion, Jr. and William Conselman. Based on a novel by Louis Frederick Nebel. Direction by Norman Taurog. 20th Century-Fox.

Three people disappear at the same time. It is the dead of winter. *Millicent Kendall,* attired in a fur coat over her nightgown with only a dinner frock in her suitcase, is rushing in her car to elope with a lover of whom her father disapproves. *Peter Nostrand,* having filled his suitcase with bottles of liquor, drives madly in the same direction, fleeing an enraged husband who thinks *Peter* is to blame in a quarrel between his wife and himself. *Dutch Nelson,* a gangster who has just killed a man, is the third person in flight. All three find refuge in a summer cabin in the woods. There is much merriment over the county sheriff and his posse, and all kinds of mistakes are made as to identity, but eventually everything turns out happily for *Peter* and *Millicent.* The story is farce-comedy and the kind of thing that has been done to death. There is too much insanely fast driving, noisy machine gun firing and forced humor.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No — **Children, 8 to 12** No

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FIRE OVER ENGLAND

Flora Robson, Morton Salten, Laurence Olivier, Raymond Massey, Vivien Leigh. Direction by William K. Howard. An Alexander Korda-London Films production. U.A.

The Elizabethan era provides a wealth of dramatic material, and in this case a previously untouched aspect is presented. When Philip of Spain is about to dispatch his great Armada to conquer England, and is plotting to kidnap Queen Elizabeth, intrigue and fighting follow in thrilling sequence. A charming romance between a young Englishman and a Spanish girl finally saves the day for England, and the young man returns home to honors and his old love. Flora Robson is superb as the Queen, and Morton Salten has a remarkable character part as Lord Burleigh. Other members of the cast are well chosen. The direction is sympathetic and thoughtful, and the scenes of court life in Spain and England hold much of interest. Battle scenes and ensembles have been effectively produced with comparatively few "extras" instead of the customary mob. The film is an agreeable semi-historical romance.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes — **Children, 8 to 12** Mature

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THE GIRL FROM SCOTLAND YARD

Karen Morley, Robert Baldwin, Katherine Alexander, Eduardo Ciannelli. Direction by Robert Vignola. Paramount.

In the beginning of this mystery melodrama, various disasters by land and sea are pictured, and gradually the ideas develops that one agent is the cause of them all. By a twist of circumstances, an American newspaper man travelling abroad becomes involved in the search for the criminal. Moving about in diplomatic social circles, is a woman operative from Scotland Yard, and the two, after many thrilling experiences, finally solve the mystery. The story is well told though very involved. Photography and acting are good, and a convincing though premature view of the Coronation ceremony adds interest. England should be gratified that exalted patriotism, courage and cool judgment are shown as the normal attitude of mind in the personnel of the British Secret Service.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very heavy — **Children, 8 to 12** No

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THE GO GETTER

George Brent, Anita Louise, Charles Winninger, John Eldredge. Story by Peter B. Kyne. Screen play by Delmer Daves. Direction by Busby Berkeley. Cosmopolitan Productions. Warner Bros.

In this farcical comedy we have a favorite theme, the achieving of business success by a popular fictional character. The result is hilarious fun. Plausibility is thrown to the winds, but the spectator watches with sympathy the meteoric rise to a position of responsibility in a big lumber company, of *Cappy Ricks,* an ex-navy man who has lost a leg in a seaplane accident. The irascible old president of the firm has a heart of gold and a beautiful daughter, and because of both of these, the hero is given his opportunity to make good. He accomplishes this despite the surly efforts of his rival to oust him from his position and to win the affections of the girl. In the final scene he settles a strike by the magic of his personality, obtains the coveted post as the company's representative in Shanghai, and marries the president's daughter. The scene in which he jumps overboard from an ocean liner and swims fourteen miles to San Francisco to settle the strike issue, is an unfortunate defect in an otherwise amusing series of triumphs, since there are limits to the sympathetic credulity of any audience. The incidents and characterizations are overdrawn, but the acting is spontaneous and the humor wholesome and refreshing. Altogether it is good entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes — **Children, 8 to 12** Fair

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THE GOOD OLD SOAK

Wallace Beery, Una Merkel, Eric Linden, Judith Barrett, Betty Furness, Ted Healy, Janet Beecher, George Sidney, Robert McWade, James Bush, Margaret Hamilton. From

the play "The Old Soak" by Don Marquis. Screen play by A. E. Thomas. Direction by J. Walter Ruben. MGM.

This is good old fashioned hokum in which a lazy but likable "old soak" named *Clem Hawley* comes to the rescue of his erring son and reinstates himself in his wife's good graces. The son *Clemmie* has been playing the market and stealing to cover his losses and to buy expensive presents for a chorus girl. *Mrs. Hawley* has suffered long and patiently from old *Clem's* continued drinking, and their daughter is fearful that because of her father's reputation she will never be able to marry the right sort of man. When everything is at the worst, old *Clem* performs miracles, and when the picture ends the *Hawley* family is at least temporarily united and peaceful with ten thousand dollars in cash to keep the wolf from the door. Wallace Beery's part seems made for him, and he gives his usual convincing performance. The material though not new is entertainingly handled, and all parts are well cast.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended

Children, 8 to 12 No.

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HER HUSBAND LIES

Ricardo Cortez, Gail Patrick, Akim Tamiroff, Louis Calhearn, Tom Brown. Direction by Edward Ludwig. B. F. Schulberg-Paramount.

With gambling as the main incentive in life, *"Spade" Martin* neglects his wife and makes everything secondary to his love of games of chance. Ironically enough, in trying to save his brother from the same life, he breaks his iron-clad rule of fair play and so meets destruction. Whether we are attracted by the glamour of gambling or whether we are depressed by a bird's-eye view of the underworld, the picture is a long step backward toward the gangster films we bemoaned a few years ago.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Destructive of ethical values

Children, 8 to 12 Impossible

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HILLS OF OLD WYOMING

William Boyd, Gail Sheridan, George Hayes. Story by Clarence E. Mulford. Direction by Nate Watt. Paramount.

The *Hopalong Cassidy* stories would seem to be running thin, if one may judge by this latest example. Scenes of rocky slopes, sage-dotted desert and cloud-veiled skies are up to the standard of the newer westerns, and glimpses of life on an Indian reservation add interest, but the plot of cattle rustlers and the ultimate capture of the lawless is a theme so old that it has become tedious. Many of the actors are like puppets, and the unreality of various episodes would be apparent even to a junior audience.

Adolescents, 12 to 18 Dull

Children, 8 to 12 Only fair

HISTORY IS MADE AT NIGHT

Charles Boyer, Jean Arthur, Leo Carrillo, Colin Clive. Screen play and original story by Gene Towne and Graham Baker. Direction by Frank Borzarge. Walter Wanger.

Ugly realism and whimsical romance are interwoven in this picture. The three main characters are an insanely cruel and jealous husband, his lovely young wife, and a handsome Frenchman. The latter turns out to be not only an ideal prince charming who rescues the lady in distress, but also the best head waiter in the world. Colin Clive, Jean Arthur, and Charles Boyer are excellent in these three parts, and Leo Carrillo, who plays the role of a famous and temperamental chef, adds a delightful touch of humor. To provide a high spot of dramatic thrill, and perhaps to make this one of the "big" pictures of the year, a sequence is included showing what is said to be a reinactment of the sinking of the *Titantic.* While it is sufficiently thrilling and offers a means of bringing the complications of the plot to a logical conclusion, it is unnecessarily melodramatic and out of proportion to the rest of the picture. The gaiety and charm of the romantic love story make the production enjoyable. The heavier moments are too morbidly disagreeable to be entertaining.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

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HOLLYWOOD COWBOY

George O'Brien, Cecilia Parker, Maude Eburne, Joe Caits, Frank Milan, Charles Middleton. Original screen play by Dan Jarrett and Ewing Scott. Direction by Ewing Scott. A George A. Hirliman Production. R.K.O.

This is a picture built along the lines of the usual western but having several new angles. Its theme is closely allied with the social unrest and prevalence of strikes currently in newspaper headlines, a fact which gives it more contemporary interest. The hero, George O'Brien, instead of playing his usual bonafide cowboy role is cast as a movie star impersonating a ranch hand. The conflict is one between local ranch owners and racketeers who have come west from Chicago to "cut in" on a shipment of livestock and terrorize the cattlemen by organizing local strikers to perform acts of sabotage. The movie star becomes a valorous hero and wins the niece of one of the ranchers. Along with an interesting plot the picture offers good lines, beautiful scenery, expert horsemanship and plenty of excitement.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Possible

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INTERNES CAN'T TAKE MONEY

Barbara Stanwyck, Joel McCrea, Lloyd Nolan, Stanley Ridges. Direction by Alfred Santell. Paramount.

A double plot, treats of a young surgeon, reprimanded for peforming experimental operations in a clinic, and an unfortunate young mother who has been deprived of her baby. The film acquires its name when a grateful gangster, whose life has been saved by an emergency operation, proffers a sheaf of greenbacks for the interne's services. The leading parts are well played, and there is a certain amount of human interest, but on the whole it ranks only as passable melodrama.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** Mature

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THE JONES FAMILY IN BIG BUSINESS

Jed Prouty, Shirley Deane, Spring Byington, Russell Gleason, Kenneth Howell, Allan Lane, George Ernest, June Carlson, Florence Roberts, Billy Mahan. Original story by Ron Ferguson and Eleanor De Lamater. Based on the characters created by Katherine Kavanaugh. Direction by Frank R. Strayer. 20th Century-Fox.

Movie audiences are becoming so interested in the members of the *Jones* family that it matters very little what they do as long as they are themselves. Their troubles in this picture are due to a promoter who persuades the father to invest in bad oil stock. However *Granny* is as astute as ever, and with the cooperation of the boys, including *Bonnie's* fiance, she averts disaster. The picture has the same simple, human qualities that have made its forerunners so popular.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

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KID GALAHAD

Edward G. Robinson, Bette Davis, Humphrey Bogart, Wayne Morris. From the Saturday Evening Post story by Francis Wallace. Screen play by Seton I. Miller. Direction by Michael Curtiz. Warner Brothers.

For those who like the prizefight-racketeer picture, "Kid Galahad" will be an exciting experience. Edward G. Robinson as *Nick Donati,* a fight promoter, has sworn vengeance against *Turkey Morgan,* played by Humphrey Bogart, another promoter who has doublecrossed him. *Donati* discovers a bellhop just from the country and anxious to make money. He calls him *Galahad* because of his innocence and decency and decides to train him for the great bout with *Turkey's* entry. Bette Davis, splendid as usual, playing *Fluff, Donati's* sweetheart, falls in love with *Galahad,* but his love is given to *Donati's* unsophisticated sister. *Donati,* determined to keep his family away from the crookedness of the ring, is furious, and in a mad attempt to get rid of *Galahad,* sends him into the ring unprepared. The picture is exceptionally well directed and acted, and splendid photography makes it seem very real, especially the scenes of the ring. As one might expect in a picture about racketeers, there is murder, but its unpleasantness is somewhat offset by the love story.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children 8 to 12** No

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KING OF GAMBLERS

Claire Trevor, Lloyd Nolan, Akim Tamiroff, Larry Crabbe, Helen Burgess, Porter Hall, Harvey Stephens, Barlowe Borland. Original story by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. Direction by Robert Florey. Paramount.

In this story, interest is divided. A gangster makes a prosperous living by selling and illegally operating slot machines, bribing people in high public office and killing anybody who gets in his way. The typical reporter hero, aided by the usual night club singer, uncovers the graft. During the progress of the several plots, people are tossed out of office windows, thrown down elevator shafts, poisoned, etc. in order to get them out of the way and to provide horrific thrills for the audience. The heroine, who has accepted a luxurious apartment from the chief gangster, finally betrays him to the reporter and thus wins a husband. Such a picture as this has no constructive social value. It serves only to feed a morbid interest in criminals and their technique of graft, and the fact that the characters mingle with respectable people and have no apparent taint of the underworld, unfortunately only increases its trashy allure.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Extremely bad **Children, 8 to 12** Impossible

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LET THEM LIVE

John Howard, Nan Grey, Edward Ellis, Judith Barrett, Robert Wilcox. From a story by Richard Wormser. Direction by Harold Young. Universal.

The subject of slum clearance is given emphasis by this dramatic personal story wherein a young doctor crusades to obtain better living conditions for the submerged groups in a small city which is dominated by a greedy politician. John Howard and Edward Ellis give good performances in these divergent roles, and the social lesson is one of value. The plot becomes less convincing when the callous politician is grief-stricken over the illness of one of the waifs he has befriended.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature

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LUCREZIA BORGIA

Edwige Feuillere, Gabriel Gabrio, Aime Gabrio, Roger Karl. Direction by Abel Gance. European Films.

The names of the Borgias and their sinister

henchman, Machiavelli, at once create a picture of evil. As to the character of *Cesar,* nothing is left to the imagination. Debauchery, murderousness and cunning appear as his sole characteristics with no relieving virtues. On the other hand, Lucrezia is shown, not as the ruthless poisoner of history, but as a frivolous wanton with no part in her brother's plots. The scene is in Rome during the papacy of Alexander the Sixth, father of the Borgias. Famous paintings, tapestries and buildings of fifteenth century Rome are freely used as backgrounds. The story recounts the plots of Cezar Borgia to become ruler of Italy. He uses his beautiful sister in forming an alliance to strengthen his own position, and when it becomes convenient he murders her husband, preparatory to another alliance. The fanatical Savanarola who dies at the stake in the end, is seen exhorting the populace to rise against the wicked Pope and his brood. Both cast and direction are excellent, and photography is good except for awkward camera angles and bad lighting in a few sequences. The dialogue is in French with English sub-titles. The picture is a fascinating history of the drama of the Borgias.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

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MAKE WAY FOR TOMORROW

Victor Moore, Beulah Bondi, Fay Bainter, Thomas Mitchel, Porter Hall, Minna Gombell, Louise Beavers. Based on a novel by Josephine Lawrence and on a play by Helen and Nolan Leary. Screen play by Vina Delmar. Direction by Leo McCarey. Paramount.

Adapted in part from a depressing and disheartening novel of the tragedy of old age, this picture leaves one with a most unhappy sense of the futility of life. *Barkley Cooper* and his wife *Lucy* have grown old without security for their declining years and must depend on their five children (approaching middle age) for support. Since none of the children can take both parents, *Barkley* and *Lucy* are separated, and this is the beginning of their unhappiness. In each case the presence of a well-meaning parent causes friction and disrupts the lives of younger members of the household until finally it becomes necessary for *Lucy* to enter an old ladies' home and for *Barkley* to be sent still further away to a daughter in California. Because the story is so exactly a reproduction of the petty annoyances that occur at some time in almost every home, it is as real as it is painful, although one sometimes wonders whether a good social service worker could not have smoothed out the difficulty. The problems seem gripping and vital until the old couple's meeting before their separation, but after that the picture lags interminably and the sentimental reminiscences become extremely tiresome. Victor Moore and Beulah Bondi are excellent. Miss Bondi is particularly convincing, and it is difficult to believe she is a generation younger than the woman she impersonates.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Depressing **Children, 8 to 12** No

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MIDNIGHT TAXI

Brian Donlevy, Frances Drake, Alan Dinehart. Based on a story by Borden Chase. Direction by Eugene Forde. 20th Century-Fox.

A routine G-man picture in which the Federal operator becomes a taxi driver and uncovers clues to catch a ring of counterfeiters. For romantic interest there is a charming young woman accomplice with whom the G-man falls in love. This is another example of muddled ethics, for while all the men crooks are shot, the woman is let off with a suspended sentence and is paroled "for life" to the Federal officer who is to become her husband.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No. unsuitable **Children, 8 to 12** No.

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NIGHT KEY

Boris Karloff, J. Warren Hull, Jean Rogers, Alan Baxter, Hobart Cavanaugh. Screen play by Tristam Tupper and John C. Moffitt. Original story by William Pierce. Direction by Lloyd Corrigan. Universal.

Psuedo-science and melodrama of the dime novel variety are the ingredients of a picture which is interesting chiefly because it introduces Boris Karloff in a sympathetic role. An old man who has been robbed of a profitable invention is determined to get even with the swindler and make money on a new invention. He succeeds, but only after many exciting encounters with sinister enemies. The production is a thriller involving gangland but is not a horror picture.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

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NIGHT MUST FALL

Robert Montgomery, Rosalind Russell, Dame May Whitty, Merle Tottenham, Kathleen Harrison, Mathew Boulton, Alan Marshall, Forrester Harvey. From the play by Emlyn Williams. Direction by Richard Thorpe. MGM.

As a psychiatric study of a type of congenital criminal who has an irresistable fascination for women, this is an exceedingly interesting picture. Robert Montgomery proves what many of us have suspected that he is capable of powerful characterization, once the opportunity presents itself. He uses every gesture and subtle intonation to build up the part of *Danny,* page-boy from a small English hotel, whose artless manner covers an egomania so great that he believes he can oppose all social laws and remain unscathed. Of somewhat lesser importance is his play on the emotions of the unawakened *Olivia,* whose transition to the

status of a normal woman is the one ray of light in an atmosphere of deepening gloom. Rosalind Russell is very good indeed as *Olivia.* Dame May Whitty is praiseworthy as the detestable old woman who protects the criminal, and all minor parts are well done. Production values are high. Photography is beautiful, and the treatment is in the maner of the best dramas of the stage. However, no one should go to see "Night Must Fall" without being warned that it is a long, sombre picture with a tensity which at times becomes unbearable. It has little value as a mystery, all interest being centered in the havoc caused by a criminal in an isolated English household.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too morbid **Children, 8 to 12** Decidedly not

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THE OUTCASTS OF POKER FLATS

Preston Foster, Jean Muir, Van Heflin, Virginia Weidler, Marget Irving. From the story by Bret Harte. Direction by Christy Cabanne. R.K.O.

Although this picture is named for one particular Bret Harte story, the plot combines several of his sketches of the gold rush days. *Oakhurst* is the owner of a gambling house, but that he has aspirations for better things is evidenced, sometimes if not always in his treatment of the orphan child, named *Luck* as well as in his love for *Helen,* the clear-eyed young schoolmarm. The film is one of the higher grade westerns with good characterizations, fine pictures of California in the early days and a surprise ending. While the moral is sound, one is less aware of it because of the great amount of drinking and the presence of a child in a gambling resort.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

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THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER

Errol Flynn, Claude Rains, Henry Stephenson, Barton MacLane, Alan Hale, Montague Love, Billy Mauch, Bobby Mauch. Story by Mark Twain. Screen play by Laird Doyle. Dramatic version by Catherine Chisholm Cushing. Direction by William Keighley. First National.

Mark Twain's classic has always been a favorite, and in this film version it has lost none of its romantic glamour. The picture is particularly successful in that the roles of prince and pauper are played by twins who are so alike in appearance that it is difficult to tell them apart and yet sufficiently individual in their different costumes and characterizations to make the audience appreciate the dilemma into which their masquerade thrusts the characters of the story. The plot has been simplified and much of the original omitted. The dialogue is modernized and incidents have been slightly altered but the spirit of the romantic tale is intact and it makes capital entertainment. The brutal treatment of *John Canty* by his worthless father seems more realistic on the screen than in the book, but on the whole the action has been handled with skilful restraint. The story is set in that picturesque, pictorial period in English history, the 16th century. The contrast of the pageantry of the luxurious palace with the extreme poverty of Offal Court and the comparison of the ruthless power of the nobility with the hopeless impotence of the downtrodden people are clearly delineated. Both prince and pauper are splendidly played and win the respect and love of the audience. *Miles Herndon* as played by the dashing Errol Flynn, is a delight. Montague Love gives a superior portrayal of *Henry the Eighth* which is a high light of the film.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent **Children, 8 to 12** Good

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PUBLIC WEDDING

Jane Wyman, William Hopper, Dick Purcell, Marie Wilson, Berton Churchill, James Robbins, Raymond Hatton. Direction by Nick Grinde. Warner Bros.

Tony Burke, whose artistic talents bloom unseen in a garret, is hustled into the spotlight of publicity by a wedding before a carnival audience. The result, logical or otherwise, is that all the wealthy women implore him to paint their portraits. The vehicle offers little opportunity for good acting, although some of the parts are fairly amusing, some of the songs fairly good.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Waste of time **Children, 8 to 12** No interest

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SHALL WE DANCE

Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, Edward Everett Horton, Eric Blore, Jerome Cowan, Ketti Gallian. Suggested by the story "Watch Your Step." Screen play by Allan Scott and Ernest Pagano. Adaptation by P. J. Wolfson. Music by George Gershwin. Lyrics by Ira Gershwin. Direction by Mark Sandrich. R.K.O.

A new Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers picture is a welcome event to admirers of these dancing stars, and their latest achievement should be especially welcome because it is one of their best. Mr. Astaire plays the role of *Petroff,* renowned as a Russian ballet dancer, but in reality an American youth who tap dances for his own gratification in the elegant seclusion of his private suite at a ballet school. His romantic pursuit of an American cafe entertainer who is trying to avoid him is very entertaining. Of course they dance often, alone or together, in all sorts of new and interesting settings, accompanied at one time by the modernistic machinery in a boiler room and at another by a pack of polite dogs who travel de luxe on an ocean liner. Music and lyrics, by George and Ira Gershwin respectively, are extremely successful. One sequence in the picture which everyone will remember enthusiastically

is that in which Eric Blore tries to spell "Susquehanna Street Jail" over the telephone. For good measure, added to all its other features this entertaining picture offers graceful Harriet Hoctor in several specialty dances.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent **Children, 8 to 12** Good

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SONG OF THE CITY

Margaret Lindsay, Jeffrey Dean, J. Carroll Naish, Nat Pendleton, Stanley Morner, Marla Shelton, Inez Palange, Charles Judels. Story and screen play by Michael Fessier. Direction by Errol Taggart. M.G.M.

A bond broker falls from a ferry boat into San Francisco Bay. He is rescued by an Italian fisherman and taken to the fisherman's home in the Italian Colony. There he learns to love the people, the life and particularly the daughter of his host. Various complications develop when the broker's fiancee, a rich divorcee, tries to interfere in his new romance. The picture includes some melodramatic scenes of a ship set on fire at sea, but the quiet charm of the life in the fishing colony and the views of the bay and the bridges are its more worthwhile features.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** No interest

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A STAR IS BORN

Frederic March, Janet Gaynor, Adolph Menjou, May Robson, Andy Devine, Lionel Stander, Edgar Kennedy, Vince Barnett. From the story by William A. Wellman and Robert Carson. Screen play by Dorothy Parker, Alan Campbell and Robert Carson. Direction by William A. Wellman. United Artists.

From Hollywood have come many scenarios, both real and false, about the people whose private lives are a subject for conjecture for the rest of the world, but nothing previously depicted has approached the complete unequivocal realism of Frederic March's role in "A Star is Born." In general outlines the plot of this picture resembles many others. A young girl with no experience, but a tremendous amount of faith in herself, comes to Hollywood to become an actress. By chance she meets *Norman Maine*, famous matinee idol of the screen, and when he falls in love with her and asks her to marry him she accepts him though she knows that he is an inebriate and fast losing his popularity. Through his influence she gets her first role and immediately rockets to fame while he drops lower and lower in public favor until he becomes the most pathetic creature, a "has-been." Both Janet Gaynor and Frederic March are remarkably good, but Mr. March's part is the outstanding one and he plays it superbly. The color photography is beautifully effective throughout and actual scenes in and near Hollywood will interest audiences particularly in other parts of the world.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

THINK FAST, MR. MOTO

Peter Lorre, Virginia Field, Thomas Beck, Lotus Long. Based on a story by J. P. Marquand. Direction by Norman Foster. 20th Century-Fox.

This is a new departure for Peter Lorre. As *Mr. Moto*, the alert Japanese, he conceals his motives so adroitly that for a good part of the mystery one is undecided whether he is on the side of the wicked or the upright. The plot is well constructed with close attention to details, and the hair-breadth escapes seem more credible than in many films of this type. Settings on shipboard and in Shanghai add a touch of glamour, as we follow the adventures of young *Bob Hitchings* sent to the Orient to investigate the activities of a gang of jewel and opium smugglers.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not advised **Children, 8 to 12** No

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TOO MANY WIVES

Anne Shirley, John Morley, Gene Lockhart. From a story by Richard English. Direction by Ben Holmes. R.K.O.

The name gives little idea of the story which offers several up-to-the-minute features such as the dog-walking service heralded by *The New Yorker*, the employment of a young man on a newspaper to be the scapegoat taking the blame for all complaints, and the wily tricks of some philatelists which are nearly foiled by a snail and a Scotty dog. The film is clean and sets a good pace, and the cast is satisfactory. It is not a Class A picture but fairly agreeable comedy.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Passable

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TOP OF THE TOWN

Doris Nolan, George Murphy, Ella Logan, Hugh Herbert, Gerald Oliver Smith, Mischa Auer, Gregory Ratoff. Screen play by Brown Holmes and Charles Grayson. Original story by Lou Brock. Direction by Ralph Murphy. Universal.

This is musical vaudeville on a gigantic scale. The different numbers are strung together on a thin thread of plot about a society girl who undertakes to produce a new kind of floor show in an enormous and spectacular night club. She sets Hamlet's Soliloquy to music but the musical director steals the show by introducing a new song which, to the tune of "Three Blind Mice," stampedes the patrons into an impromptu dance. Among the specialty acts are some unusual clowning by the "Three Sailors" and excellent tap dancing by petite Peggy Ryan. The director sets a rapid pace, and the enthusiastic cast seem to be enjoying themselves. The production is entertaining of its kind, though not outstanding.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Amusing **Children, 8 to 12** Too tiring and too mature

WAIKIKI WEDDING

Bing Crosby, Bob Burns, Martha Raye, Shirley Ross, George Barbier, Leif Erikson. Direction by Frank Tuttle. Paramount.

This light musical film is made enjoyable by Hawaiian music and dancing and lovely scenery. The plot is sketchy and unimportant. Bing Crosby is adequate in the part of *Tony Marvin,* a carefree young man who lives in the islands and furnishes wonderful ideas for advertising pineapples. Shirley Ross is the "Pineapple Girl' who is supposed to carry out *Marvin's* ideas. Martha Raye, secretary for the company, acts her usual boisterous comedy part and is a discordant note in her surroundings.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining **Children, 8 to 12** Possible

• • •

WAKE UP AND LIVE

Walter Winchell, Ben Bernie, Alice Faye, Patsy Kelly, Ned Sparks, Jack Haley. Based on a book by Dorothea Brande. Direction by Sidney Lanfield. 20th Century-Fox.

For sheer gay amusement here is a film that rates "tops." The main theme concerns a young man who has developed a truly A.D. 1937 disease, microphone-phobia, and here is applied the message of Dorothea Brande's book, that obstacles to success can be overcome by the driving force of human will. In this case much of the will power is contributed by sympathetic friends who urge Jack Haley to sing into a receiver he believes to be disconnected and which in reality is so active that he becomes the famous "Phantom Singer" overnight. An offshoot of the whole affair is the continuation of the feud between Ben Bernie and Walter Winchell, with the victory in this bout going to Winchell who proves himself an affable and entertaining screen performer. The picture abounds in amusing dialogue, catchy new songs and excellent numbers by Bernie's orchestra.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good fun **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

• • •

WE HAVE OUR MOMENTS

Sally Eilers, James Dunn, Mischa Auer, Thurston Hall, David Niven, Warren Hymer. Direction by Alfred L. Werker. Universal.

Bad taste. a silly plot, cheap dialogue and poor continuity characterize this film. The story revolves around the adventures of a small town school teacher who decides to go to Europe and see the world before settling down as the wife of the town's most eligible young man. She has her fling by getting drunk, hobnobbing with crooks, gambling at Monte Carlo and falling in love with a detective. All this does not make *Mary Smith* an appealing character, and the picture finally ends leaving the audience greatly disappointed that Sally Eilers and James Dunn should have been cast in such a stupid picture.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

WOMAN CHASES MAN

Mirriam Hopkins, Joel McCrea, Charles Winninger, Erik Rhodes, Ella Logan. Direction by John Blystone. United Artists.

A girl architect, with a million dollar idea and an empty purse tries to persuade an elderly promoter to give her her first commission. The promoter's conservative son who protects the family fortune against his father's wildcat schemes proves a reversal of the usual formula, but even his conservatism is ineffectual against a combination of champagne, brandy and the wiles of the girl. The billboard advertisements exploiting this picture say, "It's dizzy, It's daffy. It's de-nuts." This inadequately prepares one for the really clever dialogue and hilarious situations. It is "dizzy" and "daffy" enough to be sure and "de-nuts" probably applies to a final sequence which takes place in a tree. Here the whole mood of the picture changes from skilful farce to silly slap-stick. Were it not for this transition, the picture might easily be rated one of the most amusing farces of the season.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

THE WOMAN I LOVE

Paul Muni, Miriam Hopkins, Louis Hayward, Colin Clive, Minor Watson, Elizabeth Risdon, Paul Guilfoyle, Wally Albright, Mady Christians, Alec Craig, Owen Davis, Jr., Sterling Holloway, Vince Barnett. From the novel "L'Equipage" by Joseph Kessel. Screen play by Ethel Borden. Direction by Anatole Litvak. R.K.O.

L'Equipage, the name of the French novel from which this photoplay was made, is a term which was applied during the war to a team of bomber and pilot who manned a plane. Between these two there was supposed to exist, for complete efficiency, a perfect, almost wordless understanding that enabled them to act instantly and in absolute accord. The ironical circumstance in "The Woman I Love" is that both men in an *equipage* love the same woman and that one of them is married to her. The situation is not unusual in motion pictures about flyers, but Paul Muni characterization of the husband is an unusually artistic piece of acting. Otherwise the film is just another of the better-class war pictures, with realistic atmosphere and high idealism. Miriam Hopkins is strangely wooden and unsympathetic, and Louis Hayward as *Jean* overdoes his churlish behavior when he finds it impossible to be natural with the husband of the woman he loves. Colin Clive is perfection as the restrained but understanding British Captain, and others are well chosen for their parts. This is a thoughtful, sincere, though not entirely satisfactory picture.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature **Children, 8 to 12** No.

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■

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A PROSPECTUS FOR THE MOTION PICTURE*

A failure to see problems in the context of their historical perspective often leads to careless, hasty, and ill-advised action. Our treatment of the motion picture is a case in point. We forget that it is young. We forget that printing, by comparison, is very old. We forget that in the preliminary stages of the development of a new art, there is a period of experimentation and possibly of inept handling which must be reckoned with.

These remarks should not be interpreted as meaning that we expect too much of the motion picture. On the contrary, we ought to expect a good deal more from it as a source of enlightenment and understanding. We have not thought through, however, the changes in our present motion-picture setup which would be necessary if it is to fulfill our hopes and ambitions for it. We need, for example, much better techniques of presenting to Hollywood, and to other centers of production, information concerning what we want and do not want in our movies. We need a consumer's clearinghouse which can relay an accurate statement of our likes and dislikes, our needs and wishes. Literally thousands of persons did make quite clear to Twentieth Century-Fox that they did not want *The Siege of the Alcazar* made into a motion picture. Several pro-war pictures opposed by peace groups have not done so well recently at the box office. But this method of procedure is essentially negative. It tells the producers what we do not want. The producers would also like to know just what we do want made into motion pictures as relating to peace and war. If *The Road Back*, Erich Remarque's sequel to *All Quiet on the Western Front*, is a box-office success, this may give some indication as to what is really wanted.

We also need ways of getting our words of praise back to the writers and directors of the few really great pictures that have come from Hollywood. The author of a play which runs for several weeks on Broadway and is seen by a few thousand people may receive wide acclaim in the critical journals. Yet a scenario writer may do just as good a job on a film which is seen not by a few thousand people but by ten million, and receive little critical or popular acclaim. I am sure that Sheridan Gibney and Pierre Collings, the writers, and William Dieterle, the director of *The Story of Louis Pasteur*, would all have been pleased and heartened if they

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could have heard the fifth- and sixth-grade children of the Ohio State University School say this morning that seeing this film as a class was "the most interesting thing that we have done this year."

We need better training programs for prospective writers and directors. At the present time this training is left too largely to chance. Provisions for scholarships and fellowships need to be made which will bring to Hollywood for training a constant stream of new writing and directing talent. The young men and women throughout the country who today are beginning the production of 16-mm. silent movies may prove to be the vanguard of a new movement for developing production talent. Similarly, the production of educational and documentary films opens up acquaintance with the whole field of writing and directing, but there has been no coordination of these areas. They need organization and study.

We need a complete revision in our thinking about the problem of children's films. I doubt seriously that such films offer a source of substantial profit to the Hollywood producers. I doubt, too, whether these producers have the competence, the insight, and the integrity to make films for children that would be acceptable to thoughtful parents and teachers. If this broad statement is accepted as true by my readers, then we have an obligation to develop a wholly new approach to this problem of children's films. Is it a problem for our national government? Our state governments? Our producers of educational films? A film released by Erpi Picture Consultants Incorporated, titled *The Adventures of Bunny Rabbit,* leads me to believe that groups such as this may, with the assistance of experts in the field of children's literature, produce motion pictures that will be highly acceptable. But it is clear that the question of who should produce films for children is one which has been little explored and little discussed.

We need much deeper insight into the contributions of the motion picture as an agency of communication. Our objectives for the motion picture in education have been too largely informational. We have not seen clearly enough the power of the motion picture to reconstruct and revivify experiences. We have not realized the power of the screen to give social and historical perspective on current problems. We have failed to use the dramatic power of the motion picture to warm problems that are often intellectually cold. We have not explored the power of the cinema in developing social sensitivities, interests, and attitudes.

Though the movie is young, it is powerful. Its power can be turned into constructive channels not by faultfinding or by petty criticism of the artistic weaknesses of the motion picture, but rather through searching analysis of the potential contribution of the film and through exploratory study of techniques for attaining this contribution.

—*Edgar Dale.*

• • •

FEATURE FILMS

ANGEL'S HOLIDAY

Jane Withers, Joan Davis, Sally Blane, Robert Kent. Direction by James Tinling. 20th Century-Fox.

A brat, a movie actress and some gangsters form the personnel of this lively, impossible story. Jane Withers plays a role too old for her and becomes a heroine when she helps solve a kidnapping mystery. The plot is complicated, the humor slapstick and not always in the best of taste.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No value **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Lee Tracy, Diana Gibson, Donald Meek, Paul Guilfoyle, Philip Huston. Direction by Richard Rosson. R.K.O.

When the government is about to consign a large quantity of gold to the impregnable vaults in the hills of Kentucky, gangsters learn of the shipment and plot to waylay the armored cars. Two rival newspaper reporters with a portable radio prove invaluable in outwitting the robbers. It is a play with rapid fire action, a fine performance by Lee Tracy, good work by others in the cast and no sympathy or undue publicity wasted on the underworld.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Too tense

• • •

BORDER CAFE

Harry Carey, John Beal, Armida, George Irving. From the story "In the Mexican Quarter" by Thomas Gill. Direction by Lew Landers. R.K.O.

This Western is chiefly interesting for its out-of-door atmosphere and the zest which the actors put into its interpretation. It tells the story of a typical wastrel of a rich urban family who is sent West to seek his fortune and

his salvation. He drifts down to a cheap border cafe where, by deceiving his father into believing he is buying a ranch, he secures further money to finance his riotous living. The necessity of showing the ranch to his father leads to a climax, and succeeding events bring out some extenuating qualities in the young man. The story might have been an interesting and convincing character study if it had followed the idea of regeneration through work, but the lure of cattle rustling, shooting affrays and kidnapping offered too great a temptation to the producers. It is the usual program picture with nothing constructive to remember.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Unsuitable

Children, 8 to 12 No

• • •

FLY AWAY, BABY

Glenda Farrell, Barton MacLane, Gordon Oliver, Hugh O'Connell. Direction by Frank MacDonald. Warner Bros.

A fair mystery story in the "Torchy" series, in which a newspaper woman's intuition and ability again put the men to shame. It is a noisy picture full of loud repartee, but interest is sustained by the photography of aeroplane clipper ships and views of various cities as the reporters tour the world in pursuit of a suspected criminal.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair

Children, 8 to 12 Unobjectionable if accompanied by adults

• • •

THE GIRL SAID NO

Irene Hervey, Robert Armstrong, Paula Stone, William Danforth. Direction by Andrew L. Stone. Grand National.

It takes courage of a sort to attempt to combine the music of Gilbert and Sullivan operas with a story of a dime-a-dance girl and a bookie. It might possibly have been done successfully, but in this the direction and the acting have left so much to be desired that they detract from the enjoyment of the music though it is lovely in itself and fairly well sung. The operas are not smoothly woven into the story, and the cast is not sufficiently good to carry conviction. The story concerns *Jimmie Allen*, a bookie, who is trimmed by a gold-digging dance hall girl. He plans revenge, convinces her that he is a talent scout and will put her on Broadway in sixty days. In devious ways he collects a former Gilbert and Sullivan troup in a theatre for one night, with the girl paying five hundred dollars for her chance to appear with them. The show pleases the critics, however, and all ends well.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair

Children, 8 to 12 No

HOTEL HAYWIRE

Leo Carrillo, Lynn Overman, Mary Carlisle, Spring Byington. Direction of George Archainbaud. Paramount.

The story is scarcely more than a series of farcical situations based on domestic misunderstandings. The acting, done in an exaggerated style, is undistinguished, and the picture leaves much to be desired as entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Absolutely unsuitable

Children, 8 to 12 No

• • •

I MET HIM IN PARIS

Claudette Colbert, Melvyn Douglas, Robert Young, Mona Barrie, George Davis. Based on the story by Helen Meinhardi. Screen play by Claude Binyon. Direction by Wesley Ruggles. Paramount.

This might better have been called "She Went With Them to Switzerland," for most of the film is devoted to the adventures of a young woman who spends a vacation in Switzerland in the company of two men. Their acquaintance commences when *Gene Anders*, a thoroughly unscrupulous though engaging American, rescues her from an obnoxious foreigner in a Paris cafe. The trip is arranged later when the girl, piqued by the skepticism of *Gene's* friend, undertakes to prove that such an expedition can be conducted Platonically. The lady proves her point, but not without a struggle. The film is entertaining because of many amusing situations and superlatively good pictures of snow sports in the lovely winter playground at Sun Valley. It is sophisticated but very lightly handled, and is gay, pleasant entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too unconventional

Children, 8 to 12 No

• • •

LOVE FROM A STRANGER

Ann Harding, Basil Rathbone, Binnie Hale, Bruce Seton, Jean Cadell. From the play by Frank Vosper, based on a story by Agatha Christie. Screen play by Frances Marion. Trafalgar Films-United Artists.

It is, perhaps, a matter of unfortunate coincidence that two pictures should have appeared at the same time dealing with a murderer who possesses peculiar charm for women and leads them to grim destruction. Surely, one of the kind is enough. Of the two "Night Must Fall" is a much more notable production. Here we find a plot akin to the horror stories of the Sunday supplements, ending in a climax so melodramatic that one is undecided whether the required conduct is to faint or scream. To be sure no play in which Ann Harding appears can be devoid of distinction,

and her splendid acting, and to a lesser degree that of Basil Rathbone, raises this film to a higher category than that to which it justly belongs. Even so Miss Harding is far more appealing in parts which call for nuances of feeling instead of the wrought-up emotional display so popular in the dramas of yesteryear.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Impossible

Children, 8 to 12 No indeed

• • •

THE MAN IN BLUE

Robert Wilcox, Edward Ellis, Nan Grey, Alma Kruger, Ralph Morgan. Direction by Milton Carruth. Universal.

Here is the delineation of a serious social problem which fails to clarify its thesis. Years of effort on the part of a foster father come to nothing as the son reverts to the criminal type of his natural parent. It is the story of a weakling, and the ending omits the punishment which society demands for obvious transgressors. It is realistically acted but unsatisfactory in effect because of its unsound ethical values.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

• • •

MARRY THE GIRL

Mary Boland, Frank McHugh, Hugh Herbert, Carol Hughes. Based on a novel by Edward Hope. Direction by William McGann. Warner Bros.

It takes clever writing and acting to make scatter-brained characters funny. Apparently, a group of mental defectives are trying to run a newspaper and straighten out family difficulties. The audience finds their troubles thoroughly uninteresting.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

• • •

MEET THE MISSUS

Helen Broderick, Victor Moore, Ann Shirley, Alan Bruce. Direction by Joseph Santley. R.K.O.

Emma Foster has a passion for working on contests, and her ambition is to be *Mrs. America*, champion housekeeper of the country. Curiously, she is no housekeeper, but her hen-pecked husband does the trick for her. The picture is very thin entertainment, but Victor Moore always can be depended upon for some laughs, and there is one absurdly funny scene where all the hen-pecked husbands revolt to embarrass the *Angus Noodle Company* representative who sponsors the contest.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No objection

Children, 8 to 12 If with family

A NIGHT OF MYSTERY

Roscoe Karns, Helen Burgess, Elizabeth Patterson, Grant Richards. From the novel "The Green Murder Case" by S. S. Van Dyne. Direction by E. A. Dupont. Paramount.

When, in the unwholesome atmosphere of the hatred and greed which exists in the *Greene* household, various members of the family are murdered, *Philo Vance* is called upon by the district attorney to assist in solving the mystery. This is not so good as some of the picturizations of Van Dyne's detective tales. It is taken from a book written some years ago, and evidently its defects are due in part to a rather outmoded style. The acting is only fair, and the characterizations are exaggerated. Interest is directed toward an intellectual pursuit of unravelling the crime. It does not stir the emotions.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 Gruesome

• • •

OH, DOCTOR

Edward Everett Horton, Donrue Leighton, William Hall, Eve Arden. From the novel by Harry Leon Wilson. Direction by Ray McCarey. Universal.

The satirical comedy of Harry Leon Wilson becomes exaggerated farce in this adaptation. Edward Horton is the absurd hypochrondriac who is cured by changing the focus of his attention from himself to a pretty girl. He is sometimes funny and sometimes not, but the dialogue is sufficiently amusing to while away an hour if one is in the mood for it.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Unobjectionable

Children, 8 to 12 Unobjectionable

• • •

PARNELL

Clark Gable, Myrna Loy, Edna May Oliver, Edmund Gwenn, Alan Marshal, Donald Crisp, Billie Burke, Berton Churchill, Donald Meek, Montagu Love, Byron Russell, Brandon Tynan, Phyllis Coglan, Neil Fitzgerald, George Zucco. From the play by Elsie T. Schauffler. Screen play by John Van Druten and S. N. Behrman. Direction by John M. Stahl. M.G.M.

Charles Stewart Parnell, "Uncrowned King of Ireland," firebrand champion of Home Rule for Ireland, is a figure whose life presents rich possibilities for dramatization. His ill-advised love affair with Katie O'Shea, estranged wife of a meanly conniving colleague, may not have had the idyllic qualities attributed to it in both the play and the present screen version, but it adds the final spark of romantic fire to the story of Parnell's remarkable career. Months of painstaking research, meticulous accuracy in setting and costuming, and skillful elaboration of the stage play to include the wider scope of action possible on the screen have given tremendous interest to

the picture and made it one of the finer productions of its type. It is highly entertaining not only as a romantic love story but as an illuminating historical document. Its failure to merit unstinted praise lies in the miscasting of the leading character, for in spite of the splendid background and a part replete with stirring lines, Clark Gable gives a singularly uninspired performance. Myrna Loy, though stilted and cold in the earlier sequences, warms to her portrayal and handles the emotional scenes with understanding. Other characters are exceptionally well cast and seem really to belong to England and Ireland of the period.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Interesting but mature in theme

Children, 8 to 12
Too mature

• • •

SHE HAD TO EAT

Jack Haley, Rochelle Hudson, Arthur Treacher, Eugene Pallette. Based on stories by M. M. Musselman and James Edward Grant. Screen play by Samuel G. Engel. Direction by Malcolm St. Clair. 20th Century-Fox.

An illogical, absurd and inconsequential farce concerning a professional gold digger, several gangsters, a rich man whose best qualities come out when he is drunk and a boy whose identity is confused with that of a criminal. Ethically it is pretty poor, and enjoyment of its qualities would depend entirely upon an utterly irresponsible state of mind when seeing it.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Poor

Children, 8 to 12
No

• • •

SLIM

Pat O'Brien, Henry Fonda, Margaret Lindsay, Stuart Erwin, J. Farrell MacDonald, Dick Purcell. From a novel by William Wister Haines. Direction by Ray Enright. Warner Bros.

Though the story follows a time-honored formula it is the kind of material that is particularly fitted for the medium of the screen, and it is convincingly dramatized. It presents realistically the adventures of *Red* and *Slim*, linemen who work on the high tension power lines and whose devotion to their job discounts all its dangers. The enmity of a rival lineman, *Slim's* love of a girl who wishes him to give up his work, and the strong friendship between the two men preface a thrilling climax when the wires are blown down in a blizzard and must be replaced at the risk of the workmen's lives. The picture is an excellent one of its type.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Very interesting

Children, 8 to 12
Too exciting and too much emphasis on the lure of danger

TALENT SCOUT

Donald Woods, Jeanne Madden, Fred Lawrence, Rosalind Marquis, Joseph Crehan. Direction by William Clements. Warner Bros.

"Talent Scout" is a fair run-of-the-mill picture, concerning an irrepressible young man who succeeds in his plans by sheer impudence Donald Woods has a much more colorful part than is usually alloted to him, and he refurbishes a situation which is slightly moth-eaten: the little girls from the provinces who takes Hollywood by storm. Even if she has a clever agent, it is a strain on the imagination to see *Mary Brannigan* (Jeanne Madden) who is a "flop" in her first screen test and probably would continue to be one, make the ascent to stardom. The inside workings of a studio intrigue a number of people, and thus many will derive their money's worth.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Only fair

Children, 8 to 12
No

• • •

THEY GAVE HIM A GUN

Spencer Tracy, Gladys George, Franchot Tone, Edgar Dearing. From the novel by William Joyce Cowen. Direction by W. S. Van Dyke. M.G.M.

Some may see this picture as a strong argument against war, on the grounds that teaching a youth to use a gun in wartime is apt to make a gangster of him when the war is ended This is true in the case of the weakling *Jimmy*, ably played by Franchot Tone. On the other hand Spencer Tracy as *Fred* is also a product of the war and is a splendid example of manliness and decency. From any point of view the film is tremendously interesting as a character study of two types of men. In the first part it is the usual war picture; it then turns into a gangster story, but all through it the personalities of *Jimmy*, *Fred* and the girl (beautifully played by Gladys George) are vividly brought out. The whole is a dramatic, impressively realistic tragedy.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Of doubtful value

Children, 8 to 12
No

• • •

THE THIRTEENTH CHAIR

Dame May Whitty, Madge Evans, Lewis Stone, Elissa Landi, Janet Beecher, Ralph Forbes, Holmes Herbert. From the play by Bayard Veiller. Direction by George B. Seitz. M.G.M.

An excellent cast, headed by Dame May Whitty, succeeds in making the revival of a popular old stage play entertaining. The locale is India, and the settings are interesting. An Englishman has been murdered in so mysterious a fashion that his friends resort to spiritualistic seances to help detect the criminal. In the process the unsavory details of for-

gery, blackmail, and illicit love affairs come to light, but because of superior direction and acting, it holds its own as a mystery thriller.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No value **Children, 8 to 12** Terrifying

• • •

THIS IS MY AFFAIR

Robert Taylor, Barbara Stanwyck, Victor McLaglen, Brian Donlevy. Direction by William A. Seiter. 20th Century-Fox.

Here is a G-man-gangster picture in a new setting and said to be based on an historical incident. In President McKinley's regime a leak in official service was thought to be supplying information to a band of counterfeiters (in this picture bank robbers), and the President commissioned a young man to make a secret investigation. How the investigation was carried on, the young man's predicament when McKinley was assassinated, and the discovery of the guilty official make an exciting drama. The story is well told and derives additional interest from the period in which it is set and from famous persons brought into the picture. Whether or not it is true, it seems unfortunate that the Federal investigaor has to run true to the modern movie formula when he falls in love with the criminal's sister.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Questionable because of crime element **Children, 8 to 12** No—too emotional

• • •

TURN OFF THE MOON

Charlie Ruggles, Eleanore Whitney, Johnny Downs, Kenny Baker, Phil Harris and his Orchestra, Ben Blue, Marjorie Gateson. Direction by Lewis Seiler. Paramount.

Too little of Charlie Ruggles and far too much of assorted performers from night-club and radio land lessen the enjoyment of this film. Even Ruggles is at his second-best throughout an alcoholic scene in which he is never convincingly drunk. It is a musical version of the "Boy Meets Girl" theme with Ruggles as *Dinwiddy,* president of a department store, sponsoring the romance because his astrological advisor has proclaimed that his marriage hour is dependent on the union of a youthful pair. A medley of dancing, singing and wise-cracks makes it suitable for those who enjoy vaudeville, as emphasis is placed on individual "turns" rather than on a well-coordinated story.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No—waste of time **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

YOU CAN'T BUY LUCK

Onslow Stephens, Helen Mack, Hedda Hopper, Paul Guilfoyle, Maxine Jennings, Vinton Haworth. From a story by Martin Mooney. Screen play by Arthur T. Herman and Martin Mooney. Direction by Lew Landers. R.K.O.

Joe Baldwin, millionaire owner of a race horse, spends money lavishly, believing that for every bit spent another person will be pulling for his horse to win. Teaching at an orphanage which profits by his extravagance is *Betty McKay* with whom he falls in love. Here we have the makings of a pleasant romance, but about this time *Joe's* former paramour is murdered and the picture turns into melodrama concerning the murder and a false conviction. There are a few convincing scenes, but on the whole the picture is only fair entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

WINGS OVER HONOLULU

Wendy Barrie, Ray Milland, Kent Taylor, William Gargan, Polly Rowles. From the Red Book story by Mildred Cram. Direction by H. C. Potter. Universal.

The navy is ever romantic, as are the islands of Hawaii, and with an attractive officer and his Southern wife as the main characters the film is bound to please many people. The problem involved is the failure of a young wife to understand her husband's intense loyalty to his work and her inability to relinquish social pleasures for the sake of his advancement. As it runs its course the story becomes superficial and often melodramatic, but there is enough sincerity in the characterizations to lend interest and human appeal.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No interest

SHORT SUBJECTS

BOSCO'S EASTER EGGS

One reel. In color. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Both drawing and color are delightful in this episode of a small darky who steals the eggs from a mother hen and dyes them to present to a little girl for an Easter gift. The action however is a bit noisy and helter-skelter, showing comic strip influence.

GILDING THE LILY

Two reels. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

Demonstrating what skilfully applied make-up can do for an ugly duckling, this pictorial essay on rouge and plucked eyebrows and tricky coiffures is a good ad for the cosmetic industry. The results are amazing, not only in the present but in days of yore when perfumed

and ringletted knights went off to combat, and ladies wore top-knots five feet high. Fairly entertaining for adults and family.

• • •

A GIRL'S BEST YEARS

John Warburton, Mary Doran. One reel. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

"Off with the old love and on with the new" might well be the title of a theme for this miniature musical comedy, which relates the difficulties of a philandering playwright. It is light, ridiculous, mundane, rather a waste of time.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

GIVE ME LIBERTY

Two reels. Warner Bros.

This is an historical drama depicting scenes from the life of Patrick Henry showing his influence for the cause of freedom and specially featuring his great oration urging the Colonies to fight England. The picture is beautifully done in colors and the role of Patrick Henry, played by John Litel, is so well portrayed that the great orator seems to have come to life on the screen. It is particularly recommended for its educational and patriotic value but also as pure entertainment.

• • •

GOING PLACES WITH LOWELL THOMAS

No. 18

1 reel. Universal.

An exceptionally interesting and instructive demonstration of the technique of making the dramas for animated cartoons and synchronizing action and sound. Excellent for all ages.

• • •

MICKEY'S COUSIN

One reel. Mickey Mouse Cartoon in color. Walt Disney.

When Mickey attends the circus, he finds Donald Duck in charge of the trained seals, and after many antics Donald lands in the tank, where the seals share their meal of fish with him. Soft colors and the whimsey one associates with Disney. Children and family.

PENNY WISDOM

Two reels. A Pete Smith Specialty. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

When a young wife who is incredibly stupid about cooking attempts an impromptu dinner for important business associates of her husband, she practically ruins the provender. Then presto, Prudence Penny appears like a fairy godmother, turns chaos into order and offers a delectable repast, topped off by baked Alaska. It may be interesting chiefly to women, but it is surprising how many men like to know about the preparation of good food. Family.

• • •

THE ROMANCE OF DIGESTION

Two Reels. Robert Benchley. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

It is a proof of the clevernes of Robert Benchley that he can hold an audience at all with a subject which properly belongs in a physiology text-book. Only those who enjoyed the diagrams of the digestive tract in the "dear old school days" will fully appreciate this film.

• • •

SONG OF A NATION

Two reels. Warner Brothers.

Scenes of battle, with the flag waving in the breeze of dawn, commemorate the moment when Francis Scott Key was inspired to write "The Star Spangled Banner." The color is a joy to the eye, and few Americans will fail to feel a stir of patriotism and renewed pride in the men who strove to maintain our democracy. Splendid for all ages.

• • •

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Two reels. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Since the recent experiments at Duke University, mental telepathy has gained an academic standing. While the manner of thought transmission remains unknown, instances such as the one depicted here can be verified. A mother through her deep love of her son senses danger to his life, and across a distance of two thousand miles sends him a warning of impending disaster. Good acting and direction make this an interesting film for adults.

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A MOTION-PICTURE PROGRAM*

When a cameraman attempts to tell a story, he does it in a succession of photographs. These photographs are of three types—the long shot, the medium shot, and the closeup. It is through the skillful blending of these three types of pictures that a good movie story is told. Let us borrow this method for a consideration of the motion-picture problem of today.

We start first with the camera a long way off from our subject. Seen with perspective, the motion picture must fit into our conception of the good life. The place we assign to it will depend upon whether we regard it as a form of entertainment, merely, or a source of inspiration, or a means of instruction. First and foremost, it is a method of communication, and along with radio it is the most democratic that has yet been discovered. Only the deaf are immune to the radio, and the blind to the movies.

It is essential to remember this fact in any discussion of the motion picture. It means that fine experiences denied to people because they are unable to read, or because they find reading difficult can now be secured by the movies, which require only ability to see and hear, or by the radio, to which one need only listen. As we have speeded up communication, both of good ideas and bad ones, the tempo of education has also been increased. We have not yet begun, however, educationally speaking, to tap the potential resources of these two new ways of communicating experience.

One big difficulty which we have had with the motion picture is that we have thought of it primarily as an entertainment device. We have not thought sufficiently about its power to communicate important ideas and to develop interests and attitudes of a socially desirable sort. Too often we see the fanciful on the screen; too rarely the factual. We have been well entertained, yes, but not well enlightened. Would we still have sweatshop child labor, for example, if we could see the subject treated honestly and factually on the screen? Would we not have hastened measures to insure a more intelligent use of the land if we could have had not one film like *The Plow That Broke the Plains* but scores of them? Would we still have had some one hundred fifty deaths a year from diphtheria in Ohio if we could circulate a film showing factually and dramatically how diphtheria might be wiped out? The motion picture is an educational tool of which we have made scant use. It is one of a score in civilization's tool kit which might immeasurably improve human living were we

* From "The News Letter" published by the Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University.

not too unintelligent, too inert, too apathetic to turn them to account.

We need in general a more constructive use of the motion picture. If it is primarily a means of communication, we should communicate matters of greater import—but of greater import to whom? Let us move the cameras a bit closer and consider specifically the needs of young people. A major distinction should be made between the needs of young children (of less than eight years), intermediates (nine to twelve years, inclusive), and youth (fourteen and above). It is quite likely that certain films might be of interest to all these groups, yet careful planning in terms of social needs must be emphasized. I do not stress the word "need" entirely at the expense of the word "want," but it does seem to me that we shall not get far on the question of what movies are good for children and youth unless we consider first their needs and only second, and subordinately, what they want.

To say what children need, so far as motion pictures are concerned, is a major psychological task. We have not, as yet, adequate data on the topic. Nevertheless, it is possible to make a number of observations on the needs not only of children but of youth. Children need to secure a progressively enlightened, factual understanding of the world in which they live. As younger children they must learn, for example, that fire burns, that too much candy may bring stomach aches, that cuts and wounds should be sterilized. As they become older, they need to learn such things as that there is no biological basis for a belief in the superiority of one race to another; that the Germans are not "Huns" as we were taught to believe during the War; that a slum environment is one of the important causes of juvenile delinquency; that our national resources—soil, forests, and water power —are being depleted at an alarming rate; that public health is purchasable; that many children and their mothers die needlessly each year because we are not intelligent enough to use the scientific information already available; that propaganda is not confined to wartime. These are but a few examples of the needs of children and youth. There are, of course, many others. There is the need for gaiety and laughter, for drama, for richness and color in life. There is the need for the fun that comes from doing creative things, whether it be with needle, crayon, clay, wood, metal, or other medium.

Now when we consider present-day motion pictures as they relate specifically to the needs of young children, there seems no reason at all why parents should permit any child eight years of age or less to attend the movies. The opportunity for valuable experiences is so rare, and the danger of harmful experience is so great that it is hardly worth the chance. Even the Disney films, which certainly contain wit, charm, and fantasy and are delightful for young people, have evoked from the British Film Institute the statement that "recent Mickey Mouse films are apt to inspire terror in some children, because the aggressive motive is too insistent."

Turning briefly to the intermediate group, aged nine to twelve, we find when we analyze the film estimates published in the *Educational Screen* from 1927 to 1936, inclusive, that only 2 percent of the film output was recommended as "excellent" for children, 9 per cent as "good," and 15 per cent, "perhaps." If we were to confine child attendance to "excellent" films, there would be available, on the average, only seven or eight pictures a year. When we remember the frequency of double features, the accompanying comedies and shorts, and the circumstances under which many motion pictures are shown, we can only conclude that for the intermediate group as well as for the primary the possibilities of getting a superior program are still remote.

The situation on the youth level is not much better. There is an occasional picture like *A Family Affair,* which gives us a fairly accurate and certainly pleasant picture of an intelligent family household. *The Devil Is a Sissy* is well contrived and shows excellent insight into child psychology. *Fury* and *Black Legion,* which sensitized high-school students to grave economic abuses of today, deserve the highest praise. Nevertheless, if the role of the motion picture is to give youth an insight into the world in which we live, we have as yet little to offer. There are many diverting pictures, it is true, but do not these pictures also divert youth from honest, rigorous thinking about social realities? Perhaps pictures of the type I am recommending do not belong in a commercial theater, but in the school, the church, the forum. No matter where they are shown, it is high time that we began producing them.

We are ready now for a close-up on the problem. What specifically should we photograph? I realize that at the outset we do not have a complete bill of particulars as to what we want in motion pictures for children; yet I can visualize intelligent groups of laymen, psychologists, librarians, social workers, parents, and teachers who could, with careful study, formulate a motion-picture program that would be socially desirable. I have suggested some of the types of problems which could be dramatically presented to advantage; I suggest also that we turn to children's literature and see what there is there that would lend itself to photographic purposes. Let us see just what boys and girls would choose if they had an opportunity to select among good books those they would like to have filmed. A

study which I made in 1931 in cooperation with the Federation of Mothers Clubs in Cincinati showed that the following books received highly favorable votes on the part of boys and girls of elementary- and high-school ages: *Ivanhoe, David Copperfield, Lorna Doone, Little Women, Anne of Green Gables, The Crisis, The Count of Monte Cristo, A Tale of Two Cities, Treasure Island.* Many of these books have since been made into movies and have been successful. Young people's taste for this type of material, however, has not yet been satisfied.

The filming of children's literature should not blind us to the fact that we must eventually develop our film classics for children and youth, not from literature, but directly through the medium itself. We must develop scenarists who can write honestly, intelligently, and dramatically for the screen. Production programs on the gigantic Hollywood scale have not permitted the kind of exploration of the motion-picture medium that is necessary to advance its progress as an art. Only as we have motion-picture craftsmen working on motion-picture production not only in Hollywood but in the schools and universities straight across the country will we arrive at the potentialties inherent in this device.

A further suggestion is that each state in the country film its characteristic activities and resources and make the resulting record universally available. Ohio is now attempting to do this through the production of a series of films showing the spots of scenic and historical interest in the state. There has been an excellent film made at Wauwautosa, Wisconsin, dealing with the life and activities of the Menominee Indians. Many amateurs are making interesting pictures on 16-mm. film. A forthcoming book will contain abstracts of approximately thirty-five articles dealing with the production of 16-mm. films, by non-professionals.

Where, you may ask, would the money come from to finance these production activities? I suggest one important source: we can take the money that will be used to build one of two new battleships—about fifty million dollars—and see what we might do to use this money for educational instead of destructive purposes. This fifty million dollars might be spent as follows: There are approximately two hundred fifty thousand school buildings in the United States. For this amount every building could be equipped with a $200 sound projector. Obviously, however, it would not be necessary to equip them all. Let us assume that we would equip half of them. The remaining twenty-five million dollars could be expended in the production of twenty-five hundred educational films at a cost of $5,000 each, and of five hundred films of a more elaborate character at $25,000. Then, indeed, we would see the start of a real educational film program.

Edgar Dale.

FEATURE FILMS

ARMORED CAR

Robert Wilcox, Judith Barrett, Cesar Romero, Irving Pichel, David Oliver. Direction by Lewis R. Foster. Universal.

As the title suggests here is depicted the danger involved in piloting cars which carry large sums of money for banks and other institutions. Details of the service are interesting; there is good suspense and swift action. As often happens when gangsters are involved in the plot the audience is inclined to be more impressed with the clever technique of the criminals than the bravery and shrewdness of the forces of the law, although the latter are successful in the end.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

• • •

THE CALIFORNIAN

Ricardo Cortez, Marjorie Weaver, Katherine DeMille, Nigel de Brulier, George Regas. Direction by Gus Meins. Story by Harold Bell Wright. Adaption by Gordon Newell. Screen play by Gilbert Wright. Produced by Sol Lesser and Barney Brisken.

The unscrupulous plundering of Spanish estates by Americans in the early days of California is the theme around which this film is built. The sketchy scenario leaves much to the imagination, and the whole picture lacks the color it might have had from its romantic setting. In the beginning *Ramon Escobar,* a youth of fifteen, is feted upon his departure for Spain where he is to receive his education. Returning home several years later he finds his father's lands in the hands of Americans, and he sets out to recover the property, rescues his sweetheart from a bandit, and gets the better of all his enemies. It is all rather amateurish, and even the dialogue which should have a definite Spanish flavor is more like pidgin-English.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Perhaps interesting for historical background

Children, 8 to 12 Yes

A DAY AT THE RACES

Groucho, Chico, Harpo, Allan Jones, Maureen O'Sullivan, Margaret Dumont. Direction by Sam Wood. Screen play by Robert Pirosh, George Seaton and George Oppenheimer. M-G-M.

The mad antics of the Marx Brothers speedily reduce their audience to hysterical laughter when Chico begins by selling tips on the races to Groucho. Fortunately there is a thin thread of plot, with a minor romance and some lovely dance numbers to relieve the strain of so much slap-stick. It is said that the picture was many months in making; certainly it is too long and too crowded with incident. When Harpo turns jockey and rides the winning horse in a steeplechase, the clowning reaches a new peak even for these versatile brothers. The horse is likewise a successful comedian when he hears his master's voice over the loud speaker during the race. Harpo and Chico give their usual musical interpolations, while Groucho, as a horse doctor, runs a sanitarium. The picture contains much less vulgarity than some previous Marx offerings and cannot fail to please devotees of the Marxian brand of humor.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Tiring

• • •

EVER SINCE EVE

Marion Davies, Robert Montgomery, Frank McHugh, Patsy Kelly, Allen Jenkins, Louise Fazenda, Barton MacLane. Direction by Lloyd Bacon. From a story by Margaret Lee and Gene Baker. Screen play by Lawrence Riley, Earl Baldwin, and Lillie Hayward. Warner Bros.

Obviously a good play can be hurt by poor acting, but in this case an excellent cast is handicapped by an obvious story and trite dialogue. After Mr. Montgomery's brilliant performance in "Night Must Fall" it is a great disappointment to have him cast again as the playboy with nothing to do but stand around. Miss Davies' flair for comedy too, has little opportunity for real expression, and Patsy Kelly, Frank McHugh and Allen Jenkins struggle with noisy, stereotyped roles. It is the story of a beautiful girl who masquerades as an ugly duckling. Her employer happens to see her as her real self and falls in love with her but does not recognize her as his plain secretary. The outcome is so evident that it fails to hold much interest. It is a light program picture—harmless but hardly worth attention.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

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THE GREAT GAMBINI

Akim Tamiroff, John Trent, Marian Marsh, Genevieve Tobin, Reginald Denny. Direction by Charles Vidor. Original story by Frederick Jackson. B. P. Schulberg-Paramount.

A mind reader is an unusual figure in a mystery play, particularly when his talents also include ventriloquy and fortune telling. When a girl becomes engaged to the wrong man, her parents seek the great *Gambini* to ask his advice. Meanwhile the man is mysteriously murdered and the mind-reader comes to the assistance of the police in the effort to solve the case. The acting and direction are undistinguished and the film moves haltingly. The basic idea is sufficiently entertaining but the development of the plot soon becomes boring.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No value **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

THE LADY ESCAPES

Gloria Stuart, Michael Whalen, George Sanders, Cora Witherspoon, Gerald Oliver Smith. Direction by Eugene Forde. Based upon the novel and play "My Second Wife." Screen play by Don Ettlinger. 20th Century-Fox.

After a year of quarreling and reconciliation, *Michael Hilton* and his wife *Geraldine* plan a divorce. *Michael* agrees in the meantime to find a suitable second husband for *Geraldine*. The audience is not surprised when the *Hiltons* eventually change their plans because it is easy to see that they are in love. The theme seems to be a popular one, judging by its recurrent use in films. In this picture, it is treated in light comedy style, verging on slapstick and makes only fair entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too sophisticated **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

THE LIFE OF EMILE ZOLA

Paul Muni, Gale Sondergaard, Joseph Schildkraut, Gloria Holden, Donald Crisp, Erin O'Brien-Moore, Vladimir Sokoloff, Grant Mitchell, Ralph Morgan. Direction by William Dieterle. Warner Bros.

Emile Zola, imbued with passion for writing the truth, struggles against poverty and public indifference until *Nana*, his story of a woman of the streets, achieves immediate recognition for his genius. Success follows success until as a middle-aged man Zola is one of the most honored writers of France and is proposed for membership in the French Academy. His compassion for the humble and down-trodden remains for sometime dormant under the fat of public adultation until the infamous Dreyfus case reminds him once more that if truth is to triumph he, Zola, must sacrifice his life of comfort, his financial success, to lead the battle for justice. His famous *J'Accuse* arouses the French people against himself and he is tried for libel. All efforts to bring out the true facts of the Dreyfus case are suppressed at the trial which follows, and Zola, condemned to prison, flees to England in order to continue the fight. During his years of exile, his friends continue to publish

his pamphlets demanding vindication for Dreyfus who is at last pardoned and restored to former honors. Zola, however, dies just before the public ceremony honoring Dreyfus. The last scenes are of his funeral. Superb characterizations by Muni as Zola and by Schildkraut as Dreyfus lack reality in the later sequences in which they are portrayed as elderly, even feeble men while their respective wives, remaining untouched by time or the tremendous suffering through which they have passed, are shown as lovely twenty-year-old girls beside their doddering seventy-year-old husbands. A further hinderance to what is almost a top flight picture is the fact that the story has a double focus of interest. The freeing of Dreyfus after the long fight to bring out the truth naturally constitutes the highly dramatic climax of the picture with the result that Dreyfus, and not Zola, becomes the focal point of the story and all action following the vindication scene suffers by contrast. Thus the funeral scene is unnecessary anti-climax, and the oration by Anatole France merely another long added speech.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 No interest

• • •

THE LAST TRAIN FRON MADRID

Lew Ayres, Dorothy Lamour, Gilbert Roland, Lionel Atwell, Karen Morley, Helen Mack, Robert Cummings. Direction by James Regan. Based on a story by Paul Hervey Fox and Elsie Fox. Paramount.

Romance in a war setting, intrigue and sacrifice and the threat of sudden death are the exciting elements which go to make up this melodrama which deals with the adventures of various persons who for one reason or another are attempting to escape from Madrid. A similar tale might have been told with any other country as its locale and any other revolution in progress, since Spain and the politics of the Spanish revolution are not pertinent to the plot. However its setting in Madrid of today makes it seem more stirringly real and, in spite of the glamour of romance, brings home the devasting tragedy of modern warfare. The complicated plot is interestingly developed and the cast and photography are excellent.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too tragic

Children, 8 to 12 Certainly not

• • •

MARRIED BEFORE BREAKFAST

Robert Young, Florence Rice, June Clayworth, Barnett Parker. Direction by Edwin L. Martin. M-G-M.

"Married Before Breakfast" is a light, gay farce with a nonsensical plot about a young inventor who wins success to the tune of a quarter of a million dollars and is so overjoyed with life that he is impelled to make everybody happy at once. The whole play takes place in the course of a single night, and it is surprising how many mad and impossible things can happen as fast as marbles fall out of a broken bag. Adept acting by Robert Young, Florence Rice and others in the cast and able direction maintain a real spirit of fun throughout.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too mature

Children, 8 to 12 No

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MIDNIGHT MADONNA

Warren William, Madv Correl, Robert Baldwin, Nancy Clancy, Edward Ellis. Direction by James Flood. Original story by David Boehm. Paramount.

A sentimental melodrama using all the situations possible to draw audience tears. A penniless mother begs a gambler's help to buy medicine for her sick child. He divides his last bill with her and then a streak of luck enables him to care for them. A rich grandfather then leaves a fortune to the child and her worthless father appears to dispute her inheritance. The court scenes are emotional and unethical and the final happy denouement far from convincing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too emotional—sentimental

Children, 8 to 12 No!

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MOUNTAIN MUSIC

Bob Burns, Martha Raye, John Howard, Terry Walker, George Hayes, Jan Duggan, Fuzzy Knight, Rufe Davis. Based on a story by MacKinley Kantor. Direction by Charles Riesner. Paramount.

Those who have been missing their slapstick or the sort of plays that were given in the Pumpkin Center op'ry house thirty years ago should rush for the box-office. Most moderns should avoid this unless they have become addicted to Hill Billy humor through long association with the radio or the caricatured Arkansas feudists of *Esquire* fame who come to life in the opening reel. Bob Burns is sometimes funny, if you like him, and Martha Raye clowns through an adagio dance in a style of her own which will evoke spontaneous laughter from many who have endured the preceding parts in stony silence. The singing is tuneful, and mention should be made of the clever vocal imitation of various musical instruments, train whistles and so on.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Harmless but rather cheap

Children, 8 to 12 No

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ONE MILE FROM HEAVEN

Claire Trevor, Sally Blane, Bill Robinson, Douglas Fowley, Fredi Washington, Joan Carol. Direction by Allan Dwan. Based upon the original stories of Judge Ben Lindsey, Robin Harris and Alfred Golden. Screen play by Lou Breslow and John Patrick. Twentieth Century-Fox.

A newspaper girl, following a hoax call, stumbles accidentally upon a front page story. "Why is a negro woman in Harlem claiming a white child as her own?" As the mystery is unraveled we are taken to a prison, introduced to an extortion plot, and given an idea of the "smart" and unfair methods with which newspaper reporters are supposed to trick each other. The highlights of the film are Bill Robinson's dancing in a street scene, and the excellent acting of Fredi Washington as the colored foster mother. Enjoyment is a matter of taste.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Nothing constructive

Children, 8 to 12 No

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NORTH OF THE RIO GRANDE

William Boyd, George Hayes, Stephen Morris, Russell Hayden. Based on "Cottonwood Gulch" from Clarence E. Mulford's book. Direction by Nate Watt. Paramount.

A rip-roaring Western of the *Hopalong Cassidy* series treats of the unmasking and punishment of a Lone Wolf bandit who poses as a bank president. Pursuit of speeding planes, hold-ups, gun play and hair-raising encounters keep excitement at a high pitch. As usual the mountain scenery is good, the acting negligible except that of George Hayes as the funny piano-strumming old direlect, *Windy*.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 If not too excitable

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PICK A STAR

Patsy Kelly, Jack Haley, Rosina Lawrence, Mischa Auer, Lyda Roberti. Direction by Edward Sedgwick. Original story and screen play by Richard Flournoy, Arthur Vernon Jones and Thomas J. Dugan. Hal Roach. M-G-M.

This is a typical musical comedy program filler about the winner of a beauty contest who goes to Hollywood to get a job in the movies. Her hometown suitor goes along to protect her, gets a job as a waiter in a night club and manages to be on hand at the crucial moment to procure a screen test for the girl. Some of the dialogue is amusing and the elaborate choruses are pleasing; however, various incidents of the plot give the impression that in Hollywood any path to success is acceptable.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

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RIDING ON AIR

Joe E. Brown, Guy Kibee, Florence Rice, Vinton Haworth. Direction by Edward Sedgwick. From the *Elmer Lane* stories in the Saturday Evening Post by Richard Macauley. Screen play by Richard Flournoy and Richard Macauley. R.K.O.

Joe E. Brown can usually be counted on for natural laughs, good pantomime, and hilarious comedy. This is the sort of role he often fills, that of the small town boy with high ambitions who wants to go out and conquer the world for the sake of his "best girl." Here he competes in an essay contest, and when he wins the prize is entrapped by a tricky promoter, played amusingly by rotund Guy Kibbee. When *Elmer* invests in a company to develop a radio beam for control of airplanes from the ground, he becomes interested in aviation and sets forth in a plane to capture a gang of perfume smugglers. Some amazing stunt flying, with *Elmer* sitting helplessly at the controls, results in the capture of the criminals. His antics in the air and later in the attempt to kiss his girl while perched in a tree are ridiculous in the usual Brown style.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very amusing

Children, 8 to 12 Good

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THE ROAD BACK

John King, Richard Cromwell, Slim Summerville, Andy Devine, Barbara Read, Louise Fazenda, Noah Beery, Jr., Maurice Murphy. Direction by James Whale. Based on the book by Erich Maria Remarque. Screen play by R. C. Sherriff and Charles Kenyon. Universal.

With the rest of the world alarmingly near the verge of another war, perhaps such a bitter preachment against war as Erich Remarque's "The Road Back" will appeal strongly to American audiences. It has been exceedingly well adapted for the screen and though it treats of conditions in Germany during the World War and after the Armistice of 1918, it shows impressively the plight of young soldiers returning to their home land and finding themselves hopelessly maladjusted and pitifully unable to fit themselves as civilians into a satisfactory scheme of life. The war sequences are tremendously realistic, and the problems of the men upon their return are logically and dramatically portrayed. There is some ill-advised comedy relief which is doubtless intended to placate those who do not like to dwell upon serious matters, but this is a minor flaw in an otherwise well-balanced and intelligent picture.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very mature

Children, 8 to 12 No

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SING AND BE HAPPY

Anthony Martin, Leah Ray, Joan Davis, Helen Westley, Allan Lane, Dixie Dunbar. Direction by James Tinling. 20th Century-Fox.

In the sketchy plot of this musical a rich man's son prefers leading an orchestra to participation in his father's advertising business until his love for the daughter of a rival ad-

vertiser changes his point of view. It is trivial matter with swing bands, blue singers and assorted radio performers presenting themselves on every occasion. Acting is mediocre and incidents poorly coordinated.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Waste of time **Children, 8 to 12** Waste of time

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THE SINGING MARINE

Dick Powell, Doris Weston, Lee Dixon, Hugh Herbert, Allen Jenkins. Direction by Ray Enright. Warner Bros.

The Marines and the radio become pretty well jumbled in this film of a young man in the service who in his off-time is permitted by an unusually beneficent or absent-minded Uncle Sam to make $50,000 and travel on luxury liners. Perhaps a musical does not need to make sense. It has a good measure of fun and frivolity, some sprightly tap dancing, a pretty heroine in the person of Doris Weston, a good deal of the debonair Dick Powell and a bagful of new songs, including the lively *Lady Who Wouldn't Be Kissed.* Locations shift from the shore near San Diego to New York to China and include some very elaborate settings. It is not as good as Powell's last picture, but those who like the type will be entertained.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Amusing **Children, 8 to 12** Mature

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SLAVE SHIP

Warner Baxter, Wallace Beery, Mickey Rooney, Elizabeth Allen. Direction by Tay Garnett. 20th Century-Fox.

A starkly realistic film, brutal, powerful, revives the horrors of the slave trade in the years preceding the Civil War. Warner Baxter as *Captain Lovett,* attempts to abandon his evil calling for the love of a young girl in the town of Salem and encounters almost insuperable difficulties. The crew of his ship mutinies, and his unregenerate partner (Wallace Berry) swiftly arranges murder. Both the parts are well done, as are those of the cabin boy (Mickey Rooney) and the vicious slave dealer (Joseph Schildkraut). It is a drama of cruelty and carnage, marked by exceptional direction and outstanding photography, suitable for those with strong nerves and stomachs.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Dreadful **Children, 8 to 12** Dreadful

• • •

THERE GOES MY GIRL

Gene Raymond, Ann Sothern, Gordon Jones, Richard Lane. Direction by Ben Holmes. R.K.O.

An editor attempts to control the love-life of his pet reporter and sets in motion quarrels, rivalry and no end of complications for a pair of newspaper reporters. It all begins with a parting at the altar and is for the most part in a farcical vein, man pursuing woman and woman pursuing man, although the high-powered drama of a murder case brings the pugnacious lovers together in the end. Credit is due the director for swift sequence of events, and the personalities of the two main actors add color to a theme which, after all, has been used a good many times in the past.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable **Children, 8 to 12** Too sophisticated

• • •

THEY WON'T FORGET

Claude Rains, Gloria Dickson, Edward Norris, Otto Kruger, Allyn Joslyn, Lana Turner, Elisha Cook, Jr., Clinton Rosemond, Ann Shoemaker, Paul Everton, Trevor Bardette, Elliott Sullivan, Wilmor Hines. Direction by Mervyn LeRoy. From the novel "Death in the Deep South" by Ward Greene. Warner Bros.

This remarkable picture tells the story of the brutal murder of a young girl in a Southern city, and the conviction and subsequent lynching of a young school teacher from New York for the crime. While the book based on a nationally known case, stresses the hatred of the unreconstructed South for the North, this aspect fortunately is given less importance in the film. The events described might well have occurred in any locality where mob prejudice and yellow journalism flourishes. Spurred by political ambition, the District Attorney engineers a sensational trial with a maximum of publicity for himself. He scorns any attempt to fasten the crime on the colored janitor against whom a case might readily have been worked up. Instead, aided by sensation seeking newspapers, he concocts a plausible enough case against the young New York teacher, thus creating a scandal of nation-wide proportions. Claude Rains achieves a remarkable characterization as the District Attorney, and minor parts are well cast. The direction is fluent and thoughtful and the plot is unfolded with merciless clarity. The story is depressing in the extreme but is intellectually fascinating. The ending leaves one wondering as to the true facts, and no attempt is made to explain or to point to a moral.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 By no means **Children, 8 to 12** Impossible

• • •

TWO WHO DARED

Anna Sten, Henry Wilcoxon. Direction by Eugene Frenke. Grand National.

In America where holiday spirit is expressed in eating hot dogs and riding on roller coasters, we nevertheless enjoy seeing Russian peasants at a country carnival, dressed in their lovely costumes, singing and dancing and leaping over the flames of a bonfire. But about here our interest will begin to wane because

"Two Who Dared" tells an obvious story in a poky way. Anna Sten as a beautiful peasant girl meets and loves an arrogant young officer in the Tsar's army. That she is doomed to suffer is all too apparent, and as the story progresses the expected situations develop and are resolved in the expected way. Perhaps the denouement would be a surprise were it not for the title which tactlessly gives away the whole story.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too sophisticated — **Children, 8 to 12** No

• • •

WEE WILLIE WINKIE

Shirley Temple, Victor McLaglen, C. Aubrey Smith, June Lang, Michael Whalen, Cesar Romero, Douglas Scott. Based on the story by Rudyard Kipling. Screen play by Ernest Pascal and Julien Josephson. Direction by John Ford. 20th Century-Fox.

There is no doubt that Shirley Temple is the idol of a large percentage of the American public, and thousands will be delighted to find her in a film as well photographed and directed and produced on as grand a scale as any allotted to the starriest of adult actresses. The scenes of a British army camp on the frontier of India, where *Priscilla* has been brought to live with her crusty old grandfather, *Colonel Williams,* offer a romantic background, and the marauding tribesmen under Khoda Khan give a sense of impending danger and excitement which rises to a breath-taking climax at the end when the lives of an entire regiment are held in the hand of a fearless child. If one were not caught in the sway of the picture that ending would be incredible. The most appealing episodes are those Shirley plays with Victor McLaglen, the rough top-sergeant who is teaching her to be a soldier; each is an excellent foil for the other, McLaglen adding a fine characterization to his list. As for the adaptation, it is better not to look up the story of "We Willie Winkie."

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very good — **Children, 8 to 12** Excellent

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YOU CAN'T BEAT LOVE

Preston Foster, Joan Fontaine, Herbert Mundin, Paul Hurst, Barbara Pepper. Direction by Christy Cabanne. R.K.O.

When a young, masculine socialite reports for work as a ditch-digger in top-hat and tails, one is startled into a profound interest in his subsequent behavior. One is soon disillusioned when, like the hero of many another tale, he lands in politics and spends the remainder of the film ousting disreputable incumbents from their swivel chairs. The play is composed of about equal parts of melodrama and comedy and offers fair entertainment value. Preston Foster is good but limited by his role; Joan Fontaine is a charming blonde heroine; Herbert Mundin contributes several humorous scenes.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes — **Children, 8 to 12** Little interest

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FEATURE FILMS

BACK IN CIRCULATION

Pat O'Brien, Joan Blondell, Margaret Lindsay, John Litel. Based on a story by Adela Rogers St. John. Screen play by Warren Duff. Direction by Ray Enright. Warner Bros.

It is a feat for Joan Blondell to keep one iota of audience sympathy in the trashy part assigned to her in this picture, but somehow she does succeed in retaining a little, while, as *Timmy*, an obnoxious newspaper reporter, she smashes innumerable glass doors and drives a perfectly innocent woman to the verge of death. Pat O'Brien's role of editor is even more reprehensible. While the rotten tactics of tabloid papers are exposed, there is no suggestion that those responsible for the dirty smearing of helpless characters ever should be punished. The film moves at the swift, emphatic tempo established for newspaper stories by "Front Page" and has a number of amusing incidents, but the final impression is one of injustice and futility.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too sordid. **Children, 8 to 12** No, indeed.

BETWEEN TWO WOMEN

Franchot Tone, Maureen O'Sullivan, Virginia Bruce, Leonard Penn, Cliff Edwards. Original story by Erich von Stroheim. Screen play by Frederick Stephani and Marion Parsonnet. Direction by George B. Seitz. M.-G.-M.

Franchot Tone is a successful young surgeon, *Meighan*, whose life is influenced by his frivolous wife and by a sympathetic and efficient nurse who aids him in his services to humanity. The life in a great general hospital is realistically pictured. Franchot Tone is very good as are the women in their contrasting roles, but one hackneyed situation follows another until the plot becomes almost absurd.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Sophisticated. **Children, 8 to 12** NO.

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BORN RECKLESS

Rochelle Hudson, Brian Donlevy, Bartob MacLane, Robert Kent, Harry Carey. Based on a story by Jack Andrews. Screen play by John Patrick, Robert Ellis and Helen Logan. Direction by Samuel Kaylin. 20th Century-Fox.

A situation of the "man bite dog" category arises when an honest, if somewhat irrespon-

sible, automobile racing driver smashes up the taxis of gangsters faster than they can demolish the legitimate cars-for-hire. Right triumphs of course but the implication that all is fair in war is not a constructive idea to foster. Rochelle Hudson plays the part of a gangster's moll who is striving to find evidence to free her brother. It is a stirring melodrama which some people will find too violent for their taste.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No.

Children, 8 to 12 Impossible.

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DEAD END

Sylvia Sidney, Joel McCrea, Humphrey Bogart, Claire Trevor, Allen Jenkins, Wendy Barrie, Margaret Main. Direction by William Wyler. From the play by Sidney Kingsley. Samuel Goldwyn Production—United Artists.

"Dead End" is not for audiences who want to be amused, for it presents a tragic theme so explicitly that even the most inveterate optimist could not ignore it. It shows the extreme of social injustice without attempting to provide a solution or offering a suggestion that any of its characters will escape from their sordid environment. In the shadow of a fashionable waterfront apartment house a gang of boys play in the dark street of a New York slum, learning by example and necessity how to be the public enemies of tomorrow. Though adult roles are more prominent in the development of the plot, the boys are the important factor in establishing the mood of the picture. They are shown as they were on the stage, crafty, cynical but not bitter, getting their fun from outwitting the cop or fighting with a rival gang, and wholly without reverence for people or things. In the screen adaption slight changes have been made in some of the characters but the total effect remains the same. The production is technically a work of art. Settings, photography and musical background are notably fine. The large cast is uniformly good and no one member overshadows the others.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Depressing and mature.

Children, 8 to 12 Entirely unsuitable.

• • •

THE EMPEROR'S CANDLESTICKS

William Powell, Luise Rainer, Robert Young, Maureen O'Sullivan, Henry Stephenson. Directed by George Fitzmaurice. Screen play by Monckton Hoffe and Harold Goldman. Based on the book by Baroness Orczy. M.-G.-M.

A story of international intrigue seldom fails to interest, even though the plot may belong to the red plush and gilt era of romantic adventure. When *Grand Duke Peter*, son of the Czar, is kidnaped and held as hostage for the life of a rebel leader, he is forced to write a letter to his father requesting that the prisoner be freed. To deliver the letter to the Imperial Russian court, the services of William Powell, as a spy in the rebel party, are enlisted. Powell hears that his friend, *Prince Johann*, is sending a pair of historic candlesticks to St. Petersburg, offers to deliver them and conceals the letter in a secret compartment in one of the candlesticks. Before he can start, Luise Rainer as a spy in the Imperial government service, obtains the candlesticks and hides her own secret papers in the other compartment. While on the train they are stolen and the two spies join forces in the attempt to recover them. After mutual misunderstandings and suspicions the pair fall in love, and problems are solved by the kindly intervention of the Czar. The film is beautifully acted and staged but suffers from lack of material. The direction is fluent and makes the most of a somewhat threadbare plot.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes.

Children, 8 to 12 Harmless but of little interest.

• • •

EASY LIVING

Jean Arthur, Edward Arnold, Ray Milland, Luis Alberni, Mary Nash. Directed by Mitchell Leisen. Screen play by Preston Sturges. Based on a story by Vera Caspary. Paramount.

It is no small achievement to produce a farce running the gamut of hilarity from sophisticated comedy to slapstick and never for an instant allow the pace to flag. The action and the innumerable gags are so deftly handled that there is no let-down in humor and interest. Jean Arthur deserves credit as one of the screen's leading comediennes. As *Mary Smith*, a poor working girl, she is plunged quite accidently into a life of sable coats and jewelry at the whim of Edward Arnold, "the Bull of Broad Street," Wall Street tycoon.

Mr. Arnold quarrels with his wife and son and faces ruin on the stock exchange through the innocent instrumentality of the girl. At the same time the interest of the banker in *Mary* is publicized in a gossip column, and the girl is offered a suite at a luxury hotel and is besieged by people trying to present her with clothes, jewels and other trappings of wealth, in the belief that she has influence with the great financier. The entire cast enters into the spirit of the proceedings with the greatest gusto, and with the able direction of Mitchell Leisen, the result is an exceptionally amusing comedy.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent.

Children, 8 to 12 No.

EXCLUSIVE

Fred MacMurray, Frances Farmer, Charlie Ruggles, Lloyd Nolan, Fay Holden. Based on a play by John C. Moffitt. Screen play by John C. Moffitt, Sidney Salkow and Rian James. Direction by Al Hall. Paramount.

Among the many newspaper pictures *Exclusive* is one well worth seeing because of good acting and direction and the fact that it shows reporters who are honorably working to build up a clean paper and community. *Ralph* and *Tod* have worked together for years, but *Tod's* daughter with a thorough misunderstanding of their aims gains employment on a rival paper of unsavory reputation until she learns her mistake through hard experience. While the plot sounds serious, there are many lighter sequences and humorous passages by Charlie Ruggles and Fred MacMurray. Ruggles seldom has the opportunity for such a strong characterization and he acquits himself with merit, while both Fred MacMurray and Frances Farmer are capable in their parts.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Rather mature.

Children, 8 to 12 NO.

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FORLORN RIVER

Larry Crabbe, June Martel, John Patterson, Harvey Stephens. Original story by Zane Grey. Screen play by Anthony and Robert Yost. Direction by Charles Barton. Paramount.

This is the best of the recent Westerns, worth seeing for the beautiful views of mountain country if for nothing else. It has a regular "Western" plot about a cattle-rustler who poses as a government agent, worms himself into the confidence of the ranchers, tries to buy up their horses, and wreaks havoc until his perfidy is discovered. Some care has been taken with the direction; there is no creaking, old-fashioned technique; details of the story are quite credible, and while the humor is obvious it does not occur with unwanted frequency. Riding and herding of horses in large numbers is fascinating to watch.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good.

Children, 8 to 12 Exciting.

• • •

HEROES OF THE ALAMO

Sunset Production, Inc.

This picture deals with pioneer life in Texas while that territory was still a Mexican colony. It shows the growing discontent of the settlers with the increasing taxes and domination of the Mexican Governor which finally culminates in armed resistance when new detachments of Mexican troops arrive. The highlight of the picture is the massacre of the 153 defenders of the Alamo, an old fortified mision in which the Texans finally elect to fight it out. In spite of the fact that the production is rather amateurish in many respects, it manages to hold interest and is quite exciting in the battle scenes.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes.

Children, 8 to 12 Exciting.

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HIGH, WIDE AND HANDSOME

Irene Dunne, Randolph Scott, Dorothy Lamour, Elizabeth Patterson, Raymond Walburn, Charles Bickford, Akim Tamiroff, Ben Blue, William Frawley, Alan Hale. Directed by Rouben Mamoulian. Original story and screen play by Oscar Hammerstein, II. Music by Jerome Kern. Producer, Arthur Hornblow, Jr. Paramount.

When one of the big studios makes an historical epic on the grand scale the research department girds up its loins and rests not day or night until everything from a frying pan to a synthetic mountain is an exact replica of the original and movie goers may rest secure in the knowledge that every item is authentic. But the story is a different matter, and apparently unlimited scope is allotted to the story writer's imagination. This happy combination of fact and fancy is what makes a picture like "High, Wide and Handsome" such a lot of fun. It has everything that a rousing melodrama should have besides a delightful musical score and an imposing amount of factual information about the beginnings of the oil industry in western Pennsylvania in the year 1859. Its real triumph is the climax, a terrific free-for-all fight that will make you want to climb on your seat and cheer.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very entertaining.

Children, 8 to 12 Tiring and over exciting.

• • •

HOOSIER SCHOOLBOY

Mickey Rooney, Anne Nagel, Frank Shields, Edward Pawley. From the novel by William Eggleston. Screen play by Robert Lee. Direction by William Nigh. Monogram.

Although it is rather dated in the method of approach, the old story of the Hoosier schoolboy has been filmed in a satisfactory manner. It is the simple, affecting story of a boy misunderstood in school, won over and restored to the respect of his companions by a kind-hearted teacher. The intense loyalty of the boy to his shell-shocked father, a forgotten hero of the

World War, is well expressed by Mickey Rooney, and the climax, when Edward Pawley as the *Captain* drives towards the dangerous barricade under the illusion that he is again on the battlefield, is an efficient piece of acting. It is a good picture for boys.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Good.

Children, 8 to 12
Possible, except for the sensitive.

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I COVER THE WAR

John Wayne, Don Barclay, Gwen Gaze, Charles Brokaw, James Bush. Original story by Bernard McCormick. Direction by Arthur Lubin. Universal.

The dangers encountered by newsreel cameramen are described in an interesting manner in this picture of an uprising in a far corner of Arabia. *Bob* and *Elmer* are assigned to take pictures of a desert shiek who is plotting an uprising against the British, and due to the efforts of *Bob's* younger brother the source of the smuggled arms is discovered. The material is well handled and desert scenes are well filmed.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Yes.

Children, 8 to 12
Exciting.

• • •

IT'S LOVE I'M AFTER

Leslie Howard, Bette Davis, Olivia de Haviland, Patric Knowles, Eric Blore, George Barbier, Bonita Granville, Spring Byington. Directed by Archie L. Mayo. Original story by Maurice Hanline. Screen play by Casey Robinson. Warner Brothers.

This is a delicious comedy with a cast that guarantees entertainment. Leslie Howard and Bette Davis are cast together as *Basil* and *Joyce*, matinee idol and his leading lady; Olivia de Haviland plays *Marcia*, a love sick debutante infatuated with *Basil:* and Eric Blore outdoes himself as *Digges*, an absurd valet. Patric Knowles as *Marcia's* fiancé, devises an ingenious plan to cure *Marcia* of her infatuation, but it takes heroic action on the part of *Digges* and *Joyce* to keep the scheme from becoming a boomerang. Expensive settings and fine photography add greatly to the tone of the production. The dialogue and situations are often uproariously funny.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Sophisticated.

Children, 8 to 12
No.

KNIGHT WITHOUT ARMOR

Marlene Dietrich, Robert Donat, Austine Trevor, Basil Gill. From the novel by James Huntley. Screen play by Frances Marion. Direction by Jacques Feyder. London Films—United Artists.

A young Englishman of the British secret service loses his nationality so completely that he is banished to Siberia and later becomes a commissar of the Soviets. From that juncture revolution packs the screen with a welter of humanity, ransacking palaces, swarming over trains, jolting the elbows of firing squads. Through it all the gallant *Fothergill* shields and succors the *Countess Alexandra*, to whom he loses his heart, on a perilous journey of escape to the south of Russia. Robert Donat fits into his part with ease, but Marlene's beautiful countenance remains unperturbed by the discomforts and horrors which surround her. The lighter moments seem ill-chosen: the *Countess* floating across a lawn in diaphanous garments, the *Countess* frisking in a sudsy bath. But on the whole there are few light moments. It is a grim, absorbing spectacle of a people in revolution, probably the most realistic filming of Russians en masse which has been made outside the territory of the U. S. S. R.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Too Brutal.

Children, 8 to 12
Terrifying.

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LOVE IN A BUNGALOW

Nan Grey, Kent Taylor, Jack Smart, Hobart Cavanaugh, Richard Carle, Louise Beavers, Florence Lake. Original story by Eleanore Griffin and William Rankin. Screen play by Austin Parker, Karen DeWolf and James Mulhauser. Direction by Raymond B. McCarey. Universal.

Really the nicest part of this light and rather inconsequential picture is the model home in which a pretty young hostess spends her days and wonders about the young man who is sure to appear. When he comes ,she does not recognize him and in fact considers him a particular nuisance until they decide to collaborate on a letter for a contest. It is a fast-moving little comedy with fun supplied by Hobart Cavanaugh, Richard Carle, Florence Lake and others.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Amusing.

Children, 8 to 12
Not much interest.

NEW FACES OF 1937

Joe Penner, Milton Berle, Parkyakarkus, Harriet Hilliard, William Brady, Tommy Mack. Based on the story "Shoestring" by George Bradshaw. Screen play by Nat Perrin, Philip G. Epstein, Irv. S. Brecher. Direction by Leigh Jason. R.K.O.

"Don't Sell Musical Comedy Short" might be the name of this film, as here is related the tale of a man who offers an 85% interest in a show to several individuals when he has made sure it will be a failure. On this occasion, however, it is not a "flop" and thereby hangs the tale. Plot, however, is not a very essential part of this collection of skits, jokes and song and dance numbers, chief comedians being Joe Penner, Milton Berle, Parkyakarkus and Tommy Mack. The settings and costumes are beautiful, but most of the performers prove far less entertaining on the screen than over the radio.

Waste of time.
Adolescents, 12 to 16

Little interest.
Children, 8 to 12

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RUSTLER'S VALLEY

William Boyd, George Hayes, Russell Hayden, Oscar Apfel. Directed by Nate Watt. Paramount.

Running true to form, *Hopalong Cassidy* and his pals continue on the side of chivalry, law and order. They uncover evidence to save a cattle ranch from a gang of rustlers and an arch villain. As usual, the scenery is lovely. The plot and acting are adequate and film will please the audiences for whom it is intended.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Enjoyable.

Children, 8 to 12
Perhaps.

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SARATOGA

Clark Gable, Jean Harlow, Lionel Barrymore, Frank Morgan, Walter Pidgeon, Una Merkel, Cliff Edwards. Original story and screen play by Anita Loos and Robert Hopkins. Direction by Jack Conway. M.-G.-M.

Jean Harlow takes her final curtain call as the least boisterous and most attractive heroine of her career in a comedy of the race track which is well staged and directed and has an excellent cast. There is a good deal of spontaneous fun on the part of Clark Gable, Una Merkel and Frank Morgan; Lionel Barrymore presents a fine characterization of the horse-loving old grandfather, and Walter Pidgeon deserves praise in his thankless part of the fiance whose cheques are more in demand than his company. The story is about a young girl who tries to redeem the fortunes of a racing family by marrying a sober millionaire but is irresistibly drawn to the track and a slangy, scapegrace bookie. Although it seems as if all the surprises have been used in racing films, there is a novel and very exciting finish of the handicap. The ethical tone is that of the gambling fraternity which follows the sport, not very high, and one scene has been included as a sop to those who expect every Jean Harlow picture to be off-color, although it is unnecessary and adds nothing to plot or entertainment value.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Low standard of honesty.

Children, 8 to 12
No.

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STELLA DALLAS

Barbara Stanwyck, John Boles, Ann Shirley, Allan Hale. Direction by King Vidor. Samuel Goldwyn-United Artists.

In spite of its melodramatic plot built upon the old mother love-sacrifice situation, "Stella Dallas" is a strong, honest picture. After seeing Barbara Stanwyck's beautifully shaded interpretation of the title role, audiences will leave the theater feeling that they have been given an intimate insight into the life of a real woman. The role is not the sort that flatters an actress. *Stella* enters the picture as a vulgar, ignorant young woman determined to get ahead. She manages to marry a man whose background is Harvard College and New York society. Unable to tone down her flamboyant taste, she loses her husband's affection and alienates her young daughter's friends. In the end she solves her problem dramatically, perhaps over heroically, but Miss Stanwyck makes *Stella's* behavior seem phychologically true and what is equally rare, she makes no concessions to personal vanity either in make-up or in dress. Ann Shirley gives a charming performance and is a perfect complement to Miss Stanwyck in their mother and daughter roles.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Good values but suitability depends on maturity of the individual.

Children, 8 to 12
Emotional and too mature.

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SUPER-SLEUTH

Jack Oakie, Ann Sothern, Eduardo Ciannelli, Alan Bruce, Edgar Kennedy. From the play by Harry Segall. Screen play by Gertrude Purcell and Ernest Pagano. R.K.O.

Bill Martin, otherwise Jack Oakie, a conceited movie detective, ridicules the police for their outmoded schemes of detecting criminals and incurs their enmity and at the same time

finds himself the object of a murder plot with no alternative but to solve it himself. Ann Sothern is the fair publicity agent who lends a hand. There are so many amusing incidents linked with the mystery killer that comedy is dominant with melodrama as an undertone. It is a ridiculous sort of farce at the expense of Hollywood life and characters, sometimes verging on slap-stick, not an unpleasant picture and all in good fun.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes. **Children, 8 to 12** Too exciting.

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TOAST OF NEW YORK

Edward Arnold, Cary Grant, Frances Farmer, Jack Oakie, Donald Meek, Clarence Kolb, Thelma Leeds. From the "Book of Daniel Drew," by Bouck White, and "Robber Barons," by Matthew Josephson. Direction by Rowland V. Lee. R.K.O.

Jim Fisk was one of the financial buccaneers of the sixties, in comparison with whom the stock manipulators of the recent depression were singularly bloodless and lacking in imagination. Unmoral, frankly a robber with an exuberant joy in swindling and an equal joy in lavish spending: such was *Jim Fisk*, and Edward Arnold recreates the character in a forceful way. The outrageous battle over control of the Erie Railroad and the attempt to corner the market on gold which terminated in Black Friday present a true, if shameful, history of Wall Street of an earlier time. *Commodore Vanderbilt* and *Uncle Daniel Drew* are important in the clash of interests. The backgrounds reflect the luxury of the period in marble, polished walnut and glittering chandeliers; the humor is robust and spontaneous. The romantic element belongs more to the realms of imagination. There was a *Josie Mansfield* to be sure, but she was not as she appears. Nevertheless, the parts played by Frances Farmer, Jack Oakie and particularly by Cary Grant, are colorful and add a great deal to the story if not to historical knowledge of the era.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Requires adult evaluation. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

• • •

TOPPER

Roland Young, Constance Bennett, Cary Grant, Billie Burke, Eugene Pallette. Directed by Norman Z. McLeod. From the book by Thorne Smith. Hal Roach-M.-G.-M.

Of all Thorne Smith fantasies, "Topper" is most ideally suited to screen technique. When the spirits of a wild young couple, killed in an automobile accident, are set free on earth to appear or disappear at will, they believe that their only hope of entering Heaven is to do a good deed. They undertake to rescue their banker friend, *Topper*, from the dull routine of business and from the strict rule of a domineering wife, and by the free use of their powers of invisibility, they involve him in innumerable absurd predicaments. The trick photography is most amusing and lends itself admirably to the clever lines and situations. Roland Young takes the honors for acting by his deft handling of the part of the unsophisticated banker. The scene after the drunken party when he staggers down the hotel stairs, supported by unseen hands, is uproarious. All the other members of the cast are splendid, and the direction is flawless. While much of the humor is of the slapstick variety the film is so skillfully done that it never gives offense.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Sophisticated. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

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UNDER THE RED ROBE

Conrad Veidt, Annabella, Raymond Massey, Romney Brent, Sophie Stewart, F. Wyndham Goldie. From the novel by Stanley J. Weymen and the play by Edward Rose. Screen play by Lajos Biro, Philip Lindsay and J. L. Hudson. Direction by Victor Seastrom. 20th Century-Fox.

When *Cardinal Richelieu* held the reins of power in France he learned that the *Duke de Foix*, leader of the Hugenots had gone to Spain for financial aid, whereupon he dispatched his trusted friend, *Gil de Berault*, to effect his capture. The course of events became complicated when *Gil* met and loved the beautiful sister of the *Duke*. Somehow the picture lacks the dash and fire one anticipates; it is interesting to be sure, the women's costumes are rich and beautiful, and it is well-staged, but Conrad Veidt, fine actor as he is, seems a little too old for heroic parts and the charming Annabella is hampered by her lack of fluency in the English tongue.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes. **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature.

YOU CAN'T HAVE EVERYTHING

Alice Faye, Don Ameche, Charles Winninger, Louise Hovick. Directed by Norman Taurog. From an original story by Gregory Ratoff. Screen play by Harry Tugend, Jack Yellen and Karl Tunberg. 20th Century-Fox.

The fact that the Ritz brothers practically monopolize the stage in this musical comedy will be good news to some people and keep others away. Those who go will undoubtedly like it. It is well staged, has the expected variety of elaborate chorus and dance acts and a great deal of broad comedy. The plot concerns a country girl who considers herself a classical playwright, comes to New York, attracts the attention of the author of a current stage success, becomes a torch singer and still clings to the illusion that she can write plays.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too many vulgarities. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

• • •

WAR LORD

Boris Karloff, Richard Loo, Beverly Roberts, Willard Parker, Ricardo Cortez, Douglas Wood, Marcia Ralston. Directed by John Farrow. Based on "The Bad Man," by Porter Emerson Browne. Screen play by Crane Wilbur. Warner Brothers.

Some years ago Porter Emerson Browne wrote "The Bad Man," that delightful satire about a wily Mexican bandit with a childlike nature, a character who might have been a humorous portrait of the leader in one of Mexico's current revolutions. The vogue for Mexican bandits has gone out, but *The Bad Man* has been transplanted to China and as played by Boris Karloff, *General Wu Yen Fang,* is essentially the same character. The new setting and the facilities of the screen broaden the scope of action, and the picture while retaining the satirical humor inherent in the original, is also a realistic and exciting story of warring factions in China and a group of American travellers seeking to outwit one another in a business deal.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Questionable. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

WILD MONEY

Edward Everett Horton, Louise Campbell, Lynne Overman, Porter Hall. Directed by Louis King. Paramount.

Here is an exciting newspaper and gangster story with Mr. Horton in his usual role of bewilderment. As *Dodd,* penurious financial manager of a newspaper, Mr. Horton is the terror of reporters. While *Dodd* is on his vacation a kidnaping occurs in the neighborhood and he is placed in charge of covering the story. With a sudden about-face he spends money lavishly in the hunt for gangsters and succeeds in trapping the criminals and getting the story for his paper. The picture is well cast and fairly amusing in spite of a slight story.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes. **Children, 8 to 12** Little interest.

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WILD AND WOOLLY

Jane Withers, Walter Brennan, Pauline Moore, Carl Switzer, ack Searl, Berton Churchill. Direction by Alfred Werker. 20th Century-Fox.

In a combination of melodrama comedy and western, Jane Withers again acts the part of a child sleuth. She foils bank robbers and takes a hand in town politics. Emphasis is on comedy situations, but it is too bad that children's antics have to be so closely associated with the activities of criminals. The picture is trash but may amuse Jane Withers' fans.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Poor. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

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WINE, WOMEN AND HORSES

Barton MacLane, Ann Sheridan, Dick Purcell, Peggy Bates. From a novel by W. R. Burnett. Screen play by Roy Chanslor. Direction by Louis King. Warner Bros.

Except for exciting scenes of the race track, this is scarcely worth seeing it. The film presents a thin story of domestic strife caused by the persistent gambling of *Jim Turner* whose wife has no patience with his pursuits and tries desperately to reform him. It shows the stranglehold gained by bad habits but presents no solution.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Misleading. **Children, 8 to 12** Unsuitable.

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FEATURE FILMS

AMPHITRYON 37

Henri Garat, Jeanne Beitel, Armand Bernard, Odette Florelle. Screen play and direction by Reinhold Schunzel and Albert Valentin. Universum Films.

The lapse of two thousand years does not detract from the freshness and vigor of Aristophanes' classic. The thirty-seventh version is here offered almost simultaneously with the thirty-eighth, currently played by Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne on the legitimate stage. Sleeping on Olympus while thunderbolts play about his head, *Jupiter* hears the prayers of the beautiful *Alcmene* for the safe return from the wars of her husband *Amphitryon*. Charmed by her beauty the god resolves to visit the earth and lay siege to her virtue during her husband's absence. Accompanied by a somewhat supercilious *Mercury*, *Jupiter* descends by the means of a gigantic umbrella to the Earth. Failing to make an impression on the virtuous *Alcmene*, at length the gods disguise themselves as *Amphitryon* and his servant *Soias*. The dual roles of the two characters are skilfully handled, and Odette Florella is noteworthy as the maid. The dialogue is spoken to the rhythm of a musical accompaniment, and some pleasant light opera songs are interpolated by the Grecian women. Direction is fluent, and the possibilities of amusement are never neglected. While Gallic enough, this production is somewhat less outspoken than the stage version. The film is a worthy successor of recent French pictures which have received such well-deserved praise. Dialogue is in French with English sub-titles.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too sophicticated. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

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ARTISTS AND MODELS

Jack Benny, Gail Patrick, Richard Arlen, Ida Lupino, Martha Raye, Connie Boswell, Yacht Club Boys. Andre Kostelanetz and his Orchestra, Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra. Direction by Raoul Walsh. Paramount.

To list the names of all the talented people who have collaborated in the making of this lavish musical comedy would take more space than is usually allotted to several reviews. The title itself connotes gaiety, color, exotic costumes, beautiful women. All of these things are extravagantly abundant in two hours of entertainment that is strongly remi-

niscent of the pre-war Hippodrome shows in New York. Even the underwater ballet has not been omitted. The plot is flimsy but serves well enough to give continuity to the professional model are rivals for the title of various specialty acts. A society girl and a "Queen of the Artists' and Models' Ball". Jack Benny as the chairman of the ball is an advertising man who is on the lookout for a girl to put over some publicity for one of his million dollar clients. Since he is a susceptible young man he has a lot of trouble deciding which of the girls to choose. Among so many headliners it is difficult to single out any for honors. With the exception of a horrid dance by Martha Raye all the acts are pleasing and the picture is unusually good.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Entertaining.

Children, 8 to 12
Too long and tiring.

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BLONDE TROUBLE

Eleanore Whitney, Johnny Downs, Lynne Overman. From the play "June Moon" by Ring Lardner and George S. Kaufman. Direction by George Archainbaud. Paramount.

An amateur song writer on his way to New York to make his fortune meets a pretty girl on the train. Their youthful romance is nearly wrecked by the intrigues of a blonde gold-digger. At last the blonde disappears, and the writer is given a fabulous contract and carries off his girl in triumph to Hollywood. It is hard to believe that a major studio can offer such vapid nonsense as amusement. The characters are a crude and noisy lot and the humor, consisting chiefly of the antics of a window-cleaner and the performance of a troupe of trained dogs, affords no excuse for the existence of the picture.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
No.

Children, 8 to 12
No.

• • •

BROADWAY MELODY OF 1938

Robert Taylor, Eleanor Powell, George Murphy, Buddy Ebsen, Judy Garland, Sophie Tucker. Original story by Jack McGowan and Sid Silvers. Screen play by Jack McGowan. Directed by Roy Del Ruth. M.G.M.

Patrons will find the 1938 edition of "Broadway Melody" not so spectacular as its forerunners but none the less delightful. It has a little more plot than most musical shows and the interest is divided between back-stage problems and horse racing. Robert Taylor is *Steve*, a producer in need of backing for a musical production. Eleanor Powell is *Sally Lee*, a country girl come to the city to dance her way to fame. *Sally* is interested in a race horse and *Steve* is interested in *Sally*. Since the horse proves a winner on the track and *Sally* becomes the hit of the show, a happy ending is assured. Costumes, dances, and songs are first class, and the numerous favorites in the production insure its entertainment value.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Good.

Children, 8 to 12
Mature.

• • •

CHARLIE CHAN ON BROADWAY

Warner Oland, J. Edward Bromberg, Joan Marsh, Louise Henry, Joan Woodbury, Donald Woods. Based on Earl Der Biggers' character, *Charlie Chan*. Screen play by Chrales Belden and Jerry Cady. Direction by Eugene Forde. 20th Century-Fox.

A diary incriminating many of New York's socially elect is brought back from Europe by the discarded lady of a night club proprietor, and shortly afterward she is murdered. *Charlie Chan* enters the scene and unravels the mystery with his customary neatness and dispatch and words of wisdom. The tale is well told, photography is excellent, suspense is well-sustained and evil-doers reap their just reward.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Interesting.

Children, 8 to 12
Too mature.

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CONFESSION

Kay Francis, Ian Hunter, Basil Rathbone, Jane Bryan, Donald Crisp. Original screen play by Hans Rameau. Adaptation by Julius J. Epstein and Margaret LeVine. Direction by Joe May. Warner Bros.

Heavy, sentimental melodrama usually results when sacrificial mother-love is used as the theme of a motion picture. "Confession" is no exception, but it is persuasively told and sympathetically acted. Kay Francis is cast as a forlorn mother who through tragic circumstances has been separated for years from her daughter. A coincidence enables her to rescue the now seventeen-year-old daughter from a would-be seducer. She shoots the man and is tried for murder. A series of flash-backs reveal to the audience the story of her life and the peculiar circumstances which make the murder seem justifiable. The plot is both cumbersome and shopworn but the good cast puts over an interesting performance.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
No.

Children, 8 to 12
No.

DOUBLE OR NOTHING

Bing Crosby, Martha Raye, Andy Devine, Mary Carlisle. Based on a story by M. Coates. Direction by Theodore Reed. Paramount.

The stipulations in the will of an eccentric millionaire form the basis for an involved story in which honesty is spectacularly rewarded. While the tenent which suggested the theme is commendable, unnecessary crudities creep into the development of the plot. The presnce of Bing Crosby and Martha Raye indicates songs and music. Their fans will find both stars true to character.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No interest.

Children, 8 to 12 No.

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THE FIREFLY

Jeanette MacDonald, Allan Jones, Warren William. Based on the book and lyrics by Otto A. Harbach. Screen play by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett. Music by Rudolph Friml. Direction by Robert Z. Leonard. M.G.M.

"The Firefly" should receive the four stars, three bells and any of the other numerous plaudits that are currently used to designate superior quality in motion pictures. From the time King Ferdinand of Spain receives an ovation from his people, to the rout of the French soldiers at Salamanca, the picture grips the imagination. Against this impressive and highly colorful background, a story has been developed that possesses naturalness and plausibility. This gives depth and richness to what might easily have been merely a frothy musical. In it a beautiful Spanish dancer helps free Spain from Napoleonic tyranny by outwitting one of France's secret agents. A romance which develops between the two during the progress of the plot enhances dramatic interest. While little of Otto Harbach's original script remains, most of Rudolph Friml's songs have been retained. To these has been added a particularly charming and unique number called the "Donkey Serenade" in which young Robert Spindola is conspicuously appealing. The play is expertly produced, including among its newest features a film print in sepia-platinum tone which is as pleasant to the eye as the voices of Miss MacDonald and Mr. Jones are to the ear.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Interesting.

Children, 8 to 12 Exciting.

FIRST LADY

Kay Francis, Preston Foster, Anita Louise, Walter Connolly, Verree Teasdale, Victor Jory, Marjorie Rambeau, Marjorie Gateson, Louise Fazenda. Screen play by Rowland Leigh. From the play by George S. Kaufman. Directed by Stanley Loban. Warner Bros.

What happens in Washington when wives meddle in politics is the subject of this satire. Kay Francis plays the role of *Lucy Chase Wayne,* granddaughter of a former President and wife of the Secretary of State. She has a flair for capturing political social lions and writing their speeches for them. She also is adept at tossing not too veiled insults at the upstart wife of a Supreme Court judge. When *Mrs. Secretary of State Wayne* attempts to lure the current lion from the clutches of the *Judge's* wife, she upsets a political hornet's nest. All of this might have been more amusing if it had been handled with a lighter touch and if the characters had not been almost burlesqued. The lines are more wisecracking than witty, and rarely do the players give the impression of belonging to Washington officialdom.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Harmless but not particularly interesting.

Children, 8 to 12 No interest.

• • •

FLIGHT FROM GLORY

Chester Morris, Whitney Bourne, Onslow Stephens, Van Heflin, Richard Lane, Solly Ward, Paul Guilfoyle, Pasha Kahn. Direction by Lew Landers. R.K.O.

When an aviator is "grounded" in the United States he must go to foreign frontiers if he wants to earn a living by piloting planes. This situation is used as the basis for "Flight from Glory" which is a bitterly tragic film depicting the plight of derelict airmen who have gone to South America to fly provisions over dangerous mountain passes from a God-forsaken airport to a mine high in the Andes. They are hired by an inhuman boss who considers it more economical to kill hapless flyers than to pay for safe planes. In their squalid quarters the men drink themselves into forgetfulness and await the news of the next victim. The arrival at the port of a new aviator and his wife foments discords and leads to a dramatic climax. The film is well acted in parts but does not achieve distinction in any way. It is depressing in the extreme.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not advised.

Children, 8 to 12 No.

THE FOOTLOOSE HEIRESS

Craig Reynolds, Ann Sheridan, Anne Nagel. Direction by William Clemens. Warner Bros.

When a picture is obviously of the class B type and falls short of that, little more can be said. Subduing a self-willed, modern girl may have its amusing interludes but to present the situations in a meritless, second rate fashion is blundering showmanship.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Unsuited. **Children, 8 to 12** Unsuited.

• • •

HIDEAWAY

Fred Stone, Emma Dunn, Marjorie Lord, J. Carrol Naish, William Corson, Ray Mayer. From the play by Melvin Levy. Screen play by J. Robert Bren and Edmund L. Hartmann. Direction by Richard Rosson. R.K.O.

Fred Stone takes the part of a shiftless squatter living in a farmhouse owned by gangsters who plan to use it as a refuge. When the gangsters finally arrive they pose as deer hunters boarding at the farm and cause all sorts of complications. It is a halting, poorly developed story, harmless enough because the law-breakers get their due, but a shabby vehicle for so well-seasoned and capable a comedian as Fred Stone.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Only fair. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

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HOPALONG RIDES AGAIN

William Boyd, George Hayes, Russell Hayden. From a story by Clarence E. Mulford. Screen play by Norman Houston. Direction of Leo Selander. B. P. Sculberg-Paramount.

This story is similar to the rest of the *Hopalong Cassidy* series. The only difference this time is that a young boy saves the day by riding for help even though he is badly hurt. The usual amount of fast riding, gunplay, and traps to catch the villain are here. *Windy* has his humorously entertaining moments and Bill Boyd is again the cool resourceful foreman of a ranch and risks his life to catch the bold cattle rustlers.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes. **Children, 8 to 12** Possible.

• • •

THE JONES FAMILY IN HOT WATER

Jed Prouty, Shirley Deane, Spring Byington, Russell Gleason, Kenneth Howell, George Ernest, June Carlson, Florence Roberts, Billy Mahan. Based on the stories of Katharine Kavanaugh. Screen play by Robert Chapin and Karen De Wolf. Direction by Frank R. Strayer. 20th Century-Fox.

This is one of the best of the *Jones* pictures, and the situations involved are true to political life in a small town. *Father* becomes a candidate for mayor on a reform ticket and is almost defeated because of an automobile accident in which his oldest son is implicated. It is the fact that all members of the family seem actual people which gives such a wide appeal to these films; they are simple, unambitious chronicles of everyday life, and yet there is enough variety in character and pursuits to hold the interest and sympathy of the audience.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes. **Children, 8 to 12** Yes.

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THE LIFE OF THE PARTY

Joe Penner, Gene Raymond, Parkyakarkus, Harriet Hilliard, Victor Moore, Helen Broderick. Screen play by Bert Kalmar, Harry Ruby, and Viola Brothers Shore. Direction by William A. Seiter. R.K.O.

A very slight plot holds together the elements which make up this musical farce. Joe Penner and Parkyakarkus follow their usual pattern while Gene Raymond and Harriet Hilliard are pleasant bits of sanity in a story that was never meant to be reasonable. The songs are good but not destined to be hits, and their rendering reminds one that the photographer who discovers some method of keeping a star beautiful during the process of vocalizing will have something.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Probably not. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

• • •

LONDON BY NIGHT

George Murphy, Rita Johnson, Virginia Field, Leo G. Carroll, George Zucco, Montagu Love, Eddie Quillan. From a play by Will Scott. Screen play by George Oppenheimer. Direction by William Thiele. M.G.M.

A rather macabre mystery tale is shrouded in London fog through which a dark figure with an umbrella moves stealthily on its way to devious crimes. The plot is no more ingenious than that of the average thriller, but the backgrounds are full of telling details; some of the characterizations are very good, and all who like dogs will be pleased with the activities of the reporter's faithful canine, *Jones*.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Rather mature. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

LOVE UNDER FIRE

Loretta Young, Don Ameche, Frances Drake, Walter Catlett, John Carradine. Based on a play by Walter Hackett. Screen play by Gene Fowler, Allan Rivkin, and Ernest Pascal. Direction by George Marshall. 20th Century-Fox.

War-torn Spain was bound to find its way into the movies and here it is. The objective, in this yarn, is a diamond necklace—a necklace that is needed to finance the rebel cause. Turning into a grimly serious game of "button, who has the button", the girl and her necklace evade liquidation. Somewhere meandering through the plot are another girl who is suspected of being a jewel thief, and a vacationing Scotland Yard detective. If the audience is bewildered by the vagaries of the plot, the actors are skillful enough to remain undaunted.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Story too involved. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

• • •

MAKE A WISH

Bobby Breen, Basil Rathbone, Marion Claire, Henry Armetta, Leon Errol. From a story by Gertrude Berg. Screen play by Gertrude Berg, Bernard Shubert, and Earle Snell. Direction by Kurt Numan. R.K.O.

Pictures made to order for a child star seldom have much to recommend them unless one is attracted by the personality of the child. However, with original music by Oscar Straus, the charming setting of a boys' camp in Maine, and a troop of wholesome youngsters participating in work and play, "Make a Wish" has numerous elements of pleasant entertainment. Bobby Breen as *Chip* is a little boy whose mother, an opera singer, is about to make the mistake of giving up her career to marry an obnoxious prig. *Chip* makes friends with a *Mr. Selden* who writes operas and is thus the means of furthering an idyllic romance and providing a leading lady for *Mr. Selden's* opera. The picture is unimportant dramatically but will furnish a pleasant hour of relaxation for those who enjoy Bobby Breen's voice.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes. **Children, 8 to 12** Yes.

• • •

MR. DODD TAKES THE AIR

Kenny Baker, Frank McHugh, Alice Brady, Gertrude Michael, Jane Wyman. From a story by Clarence Budington Kelland. Screen play by William Wister Haines and Elaine Ryan. Direction by Alfred E. Green. Warner Bros.

This light musical begins and ends with the Strawberry Festival at Pewawa, a small town in Illinois, with Kenny Baker as *Dodd,* the local songster, as the center of attention. The intervening scenes take place in New York, where his voice shifts from baritone to tenor and demands ever-increasing rates over the radio, while women battle for his favors. The songs are really fine, some passages of the film are very amusing, and although it is not an outstanding production, it ranks better than the average of its type.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes. **Children, 8 to 12** Little interest.

• • •

CNE HUNDRED MEN AND A GIRL

Deanna Durbin, Adolpe Menjou, Alice Brady, Eugene Pallette, Mischa Auer. Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra. Based on an idea by Hans Kraly. Original screen play by Bruco Manning, Charles Kenyon, and James Mulhauser. Directed by Henry Koster. Universal.

Here is a most amazing picture. The very thought of making a movie using Leopold Stokowski and his Philadelphia Symphon/ Orchestra in conjunction with Deanna Durbin and a heart-throb plot is enough to make the public gasp, but the picture itself does more than that; it commands attention through its human appeal, its fine music, and the acting of its excellent cast. The story is concerned with a group of unemployed musicians who are given a chance to play again through the efforts of a little girl with a beautiful singing voice. The story has strong emotional appeal, and Deanna Durbin has a charming personality as well as a lovely voice.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very good. **Children, 8 to 12** Yes.

• • •

THE PRISONER OF ZENDA

Ronald Colman, Madeleine Carrol, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Mary Astor, C. Aubrey Smith, David Niven. From the novel by Anthony Hope. Screen play by John L. Balderston. Direction by John Cromwell. David O. Selznick Production. United Artists.

How *Rudolf Rassendyl* (Ronald Colman) is projected into the intimate affairs of the ruling family of *Zenda* is familiar to readers of the famous novel. *Rudolf,* touring one of the mythical principalities of Central Europe, falls in love with *Princess Flavia,* and due to his resmblance to *King Rudolf V of Zenda,* becomes involved in the intrigues of the unscrupulous *Rupert of Hentzan.* The story is highly dramatic and emotionally moving, with a beautiful and fitting finale. As so often happens when a familiar and beloved story is

picture, the film version lacks the magic which carries one away into an enchanted land of romance. Yet the production is above criticism in all departments. Madeleine Carrol is lovely and appealing as *Flavia* and rises to her best scene in the final parting with *Rudolf*. Ronald Colman is attractive and ideally cast as *Rudolf*. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., acts the dashing *Rupert* with such grace and abandon as fairly to steal the show at times, and the others of the cast give convincing performances. Photography and direction are excellent, and settings and costumes leave nothing to be desired. Whether the story is outmoded for the present generation, only time can tell, but it remains a charming romance and delightful entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes. **Children, 8 to 12** Mature.

• • •

SHE ASKED FOR IT

William Gargan, Orein Heymard, Vivienne Osborne, Richard Carle. Screen play by Frederick Jackson, Theodore Reeves, and Howard Irving Young. Direction by Erle C. Kenton.

When a writer of mystery stories lives the part of one of his characters he proves himself no mean detective. William Gargan as *Dwight Stanford*, finding himself obliged to earn a living when his rich uncle dies without leaving him any money, turns to writing. His wife, *Penny*, quarrels with him and goes to Reno for a divorce, while *Dwight* masquerades as his fictional detective and investigates the death of his uncle. The plot is flimsy enough but is assisted by an occasional good gag. William Gargan suffers from lack of material and poor direction. The newcomer Orien Heyward shows little promise. After a somewhat far-fetched solution to the mystery, the conventional happy ending follows.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Poor. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

• • •

SHE'S NO LADY

Ann Dvorak, John Trent, Guinn Williams, Harry Beresford, Aileen Pringle, Arthur Hoyt. Story by James Edward Grant. Screen play by George Bruce and Frank Partos. Direction by Charles Vidor. Paramount.

We first meet the two leads, Ann Dvorak and John Trent, who seem to be of the adventure-loving type, at the glittering bar of a swank club, and we follow them through various complications connected with the theft of a diamond necklace, never quite sure whether they are crooks or not until the final scene. It is melodramatic and at the same time unimportant, one of those things with seeds of cleverness which produces only a stunted growth.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

• • •

SOMETHING TO SING ABOUT

James Cagney, Evelyn Daw, William Frawley, Mona Barrie, Gene Lockhart. Story by Victor Schertzinger. Screen play by Austin Parker. Direction by Victor Schertzinger. Grand National.

James Cagney's first appearance in a musical type of picture does not justify great enthusiasm, although his fans may applaud his versatility. His singing is not bad and his dancing is really good, but is difficult to accept him as a fascinating male star who takes moviedom by storm and is so devastating that the producers refuse to have it known that he is a married man. Much of the film is a burlesque on Hollywood directors and diction and make-up specialists who strive to mould the rough human material into successful figures of the screen. The songs which occur at frequent intervals are tuneful and will probably be popular albeit the heroine's (Evelyn Daw's) high soprano does not always record to advantage.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair. **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature.

• • •

SOULS AT SEA

Gary Cooper, George Raft, Frances Dee, Olympe Bradna, Henry Wilcoxen, Harry Carey. Screen play by Grover Jones and Dale Van Every. Based on a story by Ted Lesser. Direction by Henry Hathaway. Paramount.

Almost a hundred years ago, a seaman, Alexander William Holmes, was tried in Philadelphia for manslaughter. The trial brought to light such a dramatic and unusual story that both in England in America, the case became a *cause celebre* and people discussed for months the ethics involved in the conduct of the accused man who admittedly had ordered seven human beings thrown into the sea to lighten an overcrowded life boat. "Souls at Sea" is inspired by the accounts which were published in the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* and is elaborated into a thrilling chapter in the annals of American slave trading. The picture begins with the trial of *Nuggin Taylor* (Gary Cooper). It then cuts back to a scene on board the slaver *Blackbird*, sailing off the coast of Africa.

There follows an exciting account of the efforts of *Nuggin* and his faithful friend *Powdah* to lure slave traders into the clutches of Government patrol ships. Fire at sea, romance, shipwreck and the incident of the life boat complete the story. The film has much tragedy and brutality but it is relieved by the skilful handling of humorous scenes and by the beauty of the photography. Views of the great full-rigged ship are fascinating.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very tragic. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

• • •

STAGE DOOR

Katherine Hepburn, Ginger Rogers, Adolphe Menjou, Gail Patrick, Constance Collier, Andrea Leeds, Lucille Ball, Franklin Pangborn, Phyllis Kennedy, Samuel S. Hinds. From the stage play by Edna Ferber and George S. Kaufman. Adapted for the screen by Morris Ryskind and Anthony Veiller. Directed by Gregory La Cava. R.K.O.

"Stage Door" is a human and interesting story presented by an exceptionally strong cast. One does not often find so many roles played in as competent a way, even small parts standing out in startling silhouette. A theatrical boarding house is its locale; the plot concerns the comedy, the tragedies, and the successes of the girls who live there. With its witty, amusing repartee and swift action, there is never a let down in interest. Miss Hepburn is the debutante daughter of a millionaire who aspires to make her way on the stage through her own efforts, and she rises to real dramatic heights in her interpretation. Ginger Rogers is surprisingly effective. Her role demands a more flippant, smart characterization and she is most successful. A highlight of the film is done by Andrea Ieeds whose acting is sincerely moving. But it would be necessary to mention all the cast to give entire credit for the success of the picture. Gregory La Cava has again demonstrated his ability in handling comedy although "Stage Door" has more than comedy. It is a cross section of one phase of society—dramatic, sincere and enthralling.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature but well done. **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature.

• • •

THAT CERTAIN WOMAN

Bette Davis, Henry Fonda, Ian Hunter, Anita Louise, Donald Crisp. Screen play and direction by Edmund Goulding. Warner Bros.

This emotional story tells of the struggles of the widow of a notorious gangster to avoid publicity and win happiness in married life. After a brief honeymoon her second marriage is annulled by the influence of an overbearing father-in-law. When the husband marries again the picture becomes a series of sacrifices due to fortuitous circumstances connected with the heroine's young son and the husband's second wife. These melodramatic acts of heroism become unconvincing and anticlimatic when the characters vie with each other in their unselfishness. Bette Davis and the fine supporting cast give an excellent portrayal under the sympathetic direction of Mr. Goulding, but it is unfortunate that the efforts of such a cast should be wasted upon a typical tear-jerker.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No. **Children, 8 to 12** No.

• • •

THIN ICE

Sonja Henie, Tyrone Power, Arthur Treacher, Raymond Walburn, Joan Davis, Sig Rumann, Alan Hale. From the story by Attila Orbok. Screen play by Boris Ingster and Milton Sperling. Direction by Sidney Lanfield. 20th Century-Fox.

This is a perfectly delightful film done in the manner of a fairy tale with a prince incognito who falls in love with the little Swiss skating instructress at one of the famous resorts in the Alps. The whole atmosphere of the piece is light, charming, full of snap and sparkle. It is an ideal medium for displaying the prowess of Sonja Henie, the greatest skater of the day, who is as lovely as she is talented. Tyrone Power plays the *Prince* to everyone's satisfaction and the romance flourishes amid elaborate skating ballets, flowers and beautiful costumes till it reaches the traditional happy ending, and they "live happily ever after".

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent. **Children, 8 to 12** Yes.

• • •

VARSITY SHOW

Fred Waring, Ted Healy, Rosemary Lane, Priscilla Lane. From an original story by Warren Duff and Sig Herzig. Direction by William Keighley. Warner Bros.

While the plot of a musical comedy is usually of secondary importance, nevertheless a poor story can and does place the entire cast at a disadvantage. In this case the fault could have been partially corrected by more deft direction and judicious cutting. The story concerns a Broadway producer, an alumnus of a small college, who regains his hold in the theatrical world through the cooperation of the college students. It follows a truly farcical trend in belittling the academic side of college life and emphasizing only the

gaiety. For those to whom a college musical appeals there is enough music in the way of catchy songs and Fred Waring's orchestra to entertain, while a rousing finale should compensate for a dragging start.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Passable.

Children, 8 to 12
Too long.

• • •

VOGUES OF 1937

Joan Bennett, Helen Vinson, Mischa Auer, Alan Mowbray. Original screen play by Bella and Samuel Spewack. Direction by Irving Cummings. Walter Wanger-United Artists.

A gown shop is the locale for much of the action of this musical extravaganza and, as one would expect, a glittering array of beautiful clothes and the models who wear them become an important part of the story. Miss Bennett as *Wendy* refuses to marry the man her mother has chosen for her and through a series of fortunate circumstances becomes a model. The shop owner's wife is career-conscious and her selfishness and lack of perception finally send her to Reno, thus opening the path of romance to *Wendy* and her employer. While the story is somewhat trite, the acting is quite good and technicolor enhances the beauty of settings, clothes and people.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Unsuited.

Children, 8 to 12
Unsuitd.

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FEATURE FILMS

ADVENTUROUS BLONDE » »

Glenda Farrell, Barton MacLane, Anne Nagel, Tom Kennedy. Direction by Frank McDonald. Warner Brothers.

Torchy Blane, the woman newspaper reporter, is again the central character in an entertaining comedy. Reporters from a rival paper stage a fake murder by which they hope to interrupt *Torchy's* wedding plans. However the joke is not so funny when the murder turns out to be real and *Torchy* is the one who succeeds in catching the murderer.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable **Children, 8 to 12** No

ANGEL » »

Marlene Dietrich, Herbert Marshall, Melvyn Douglas, Edward Everett Horton, Herbert Mundin, Ernest Cossart, Laura Hope Crews. Based on a play by Melchior Lengyel. Screen play by Samson Raphaelson. Direction by Ernst Lubitch. Paramount.

Glamourously set in an atmosphere of worldly sophistication, "Angel" is dedicated to the proposition that every wife is entitled to a life of perpetual romance. Miss Dietrich, looking more like a wax doll than a human being, is cast as the wife of a famous English diplomat. When she secretly visits an expensive rendezvous politely called a "salon," she meets a playboy who seems to be the answer to her longing for new thrills. However the sanctity of her home is merely threatened because, in the nick of time, her husband, at the possible sacrifice of his career, cancels a diplomatic mission in order to become a more attentive husband. Inadequately disguised by its gorgeous trimmings and luxurious appeal to the eye, the film is specious and trashy.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Extremely bad **Children, 8 to 12** No

ANNAPOLIS SALUTE » »

James Ellison, Marsha Hunt, Harry Carey, Van Heflin, Ann Hovey. Story by Christy Cabanne. Screen play by John Twist. Direction by Christy Cabanne. R.K.O.

Another story of romance at the Naval Academy is rather light but undoubtedly entertaining. Drilling on the parade grounds, the bands, the uniforms, life in the halls, and the Navy ball during the festive days of June Week, all give glamor to the simple plot concerning the love of two students for one girl. From the outset there is intense rivalry between *Bill Martin,* whose father is

an enlisted Navy man with high ambitions for his boy, and *Clarke Parker*, a rich man's son, for whom life has always been easy. The film has good social values: the high standards of the Navy are upheld; friendship and devotion to duty are emphasized; and there is a fine relationship between *Bill* and his father who is able to sympathize and guide because he understands the problems of youth. James Ellison and Van Heflin, as the two boys, play their parts well.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very good **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

✪

BAD GUY » »

Bruce Cabot, Virginia Grey, Edward Norris, Jean Chatburn, Cliff Edwards. From a story by J. Robert Bren, Kathleen Shepard and Hal Long. Screen play by Earl Felton and Harry Ruskin. Direction by Edward Cahn. M-G-M.

In a picture, as in a novel, one likes to feel a keen sympathy with the main character. This is difficult in the case of *"Lucky" Walden* who has no good quality except outstanding courage in his work of "trouble shooter" for a large power company. He shamelessly betrays his best friend in love and is willing to involve the loyal *Steve* in a jail break to save himself from the consequences of his numerous misdeeds. The picture is full of action and has some interesting demonstrations of laboratory electricity as well as the everyday application of technical knowledge in the work of a linesman. There are gruesome scenes when the current gets out of control and inflicts sudden death.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** Decidedly not

✪

THE BIG CITY » »

Luise Rainer, Spencer Tracy, Charley Grapewin, Janet Beecher, Eddie Quillan. Story by Norman Krasna. Screen play by Dore Schary and Hugo Butler. Direction by Frank Borzage. M-G-M.

The struggle between a big taxi corporation and the independent drivers is brought into clear focus by the fortunes of *Joe Benton* of the independents and his alien wife who is threatened with deportation because someone, unidentified, has thrown a bomb. Luise Rainer and Spencer Tracy are poignantly human, yet both have played far better roles. The ending, which offers the most unusual phase of the story, is effected through the endeavors of various pugilistic headliners who appear in the production under their own names as guests at a sportsmen's banquet.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature **Children, 8 to 12** No

BREAKFAST FOR TWO » »

Barbara Stanwyck, Herbert Marshall, Glenda Farrell, Eric Blore, Etienne Girardot. Story by David Garth. Screen play by Paul Yawitz, Charles Kaufman and Viola Brothers Shore. Direction by Alfred Santell. R.K.O.

If this story had followed its initial idea, the rehabilitation of an aimless millionaire by a strong-minded millionairess, it might have been both interesting and amusing, but the story runs amuck halfway through and slapstick is introduced in progressively larger doses until the final scenes are riotous and decidedly distasteful. *Valentine Ransome* meets *Jonathan Blair* in a night club and kind-heartedly helps him home when he becomes intoxicated. Once in his house she is unable to leave because of *Pee Wee*, an immense Great Dane who will not let her out. From this situation, many amusing complications are evolved, but when hero and heroine sprawl over a layer cake on the floor, the last flicker of interest is snuffed out. Costumes are engaging, sets lavish, and photographic effects excellent.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too unconventional **Children, 8 to 12** No

✪

BULLDOG DRUMMOND COMES BACK »

John Barrymore, Louise Campbell, John Howard, E. E. Clive, Reginald Denny. Based on "The Female of the Species" by H. C. McNeill. Screen play by Edward T. Lowe. Direction by Louis King. Paramount.

When one recalls the *Drummond* pictures in which Ronald Colman played, this is a distinct disappointment. The actors can not be blamed, for all of them are capable, and John Barrymore gives some exceedingly clever impersonations. In fact the cast is far too good for a film which begins like an ingenious treasure hunt but is built up to such a frenzy of excitement that it oversteps the mark and becomes an absurdity like some of the serial thrillers of yesterday.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No, poor **Children, 8 to 12** No

✪

DANGER—LOVE AT WORK » »

Ann Sothern, Jack Haley, Mary Boland, Edward Everett Horton, Bennie Bartlett, Etienne Girardot. Based on a story by James Edward Grant. Screen play by James Edward Grant and Ben Markson. Direction by Otto L. Preminger. 20th Century-Fox.

Apparently the vogue for "pixilated" plots for screen and stage is still on, but the standard set by "Mr. Deeds" and "You Can't Take It With You" is high and hard to

match. "Danger—Love at Work" is quite inconsequential with its slightly mad and temperamental family, feather-weight mother, spoiled child prodigy, and pretty daughter who knows what she wants and goes after it. It amuses because it is perfectly absurd, but it will be forgotten at once because there is so little plot and no philosophy behind its banter.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Slight but amusing

Children, 8 to 12 Too much dialogue

⊛

DANGEROUSLY YOURS » »

Cesar Romero, Phyllis Brooks, Jane Darwell, Alan Dinehart, Douglas Wood. Direction by Mal St. Clair. 20th Century-Fox.

The outstanding remembrance of this picture is its photography although there are no unusual settings and no noticeably odd angles or trick effects. The pictures flow beautifully before one and transcend the hackneyed story which deals with smuggled diamonds on shipboard, unsuspected criminals, and a successful sleuth who marries the beautiful reformed girl crook. It is the usual class B picture to fill a double bill, well enough acted and smartly dressed.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No value

Children, 8 to 12 No

⊛

THE DEVIL'S SADDLE LEGION » »

Dick Foran, Anne Nagel, Willard Parker. Story and screen play by Ed. Earl Ropp. Direction by Bobby Connolly. Warner Bros.

The action of this western takes place on the border line of Texas and Arkansas. *Tal Holladay* returns to his native plains to find his father dead and his property stolen. Shortly thereafter he is thrown into a territorial prison camp on an unjust accusation. There is no alternative but vengeance as in all true westerns, and this is attained with gun play and exciting horsemanship. It is a fair enough picture of its type. Dick Foran's voice and personality make him a good hero for tales of the wide open spaces.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair

Children, 8 to 12 Too violent

⊛

DOUBLE WEDDING » »

William Powell, Myrna Loy, Florence Rice, John Beal, Jessie Ralph. From a play by Ferenc Molnar. Screen play by Jo Swerling. Directed by Richard Thorpe. M-G-M.

Here is one of the new style movie comedies in which slapstick reminiscent of the old pie-slinging days is played by some of Hollywood's most sophisticated stars. Myrna Loy is cast as *Margit Agnew,* a managing young woman who attempts to engineer the plans for her sister's wedding. William Powell is a would-be playwright who lives in a trailer and interferes with *Margit's* schemes. The story begins promisingly with smart modern dialogue and amusing situations. It soon deteoriates to pointless buffoonery. Since Mr. Powell and Miss Loy have already demonstrated in several other pictures that they know how to whack one another on the head, their latest rough-house seems superfluous. Even if Molnar did write the original play, we can't enthuse.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable

Children, 8 to 12 No

⊛

EBB TIDE » »

Oscar Homolka, Barry Fitzgerald, Lloyd Nolan, Ray Milland, Frances Farmer. Based on a story by Robert Louis Stevenson and Lloyd Osbourne. Screen play by Bertram Millhauser. Direction by James Hogan. Paramount.

"The Ebb Tide," one of Robert Louis Stevenson's last short stories, offers admirable material for a stirring tale of adventure. Add to the exciting plot a background of treacherous sea and tropical South Sea islands reproduced in Technicolor, also three exceptional characterizations, and the result is entertainment well above the average. It is a yarn of beach combers, men of varying backgrounds, sunk to this lowest stratum of society through circumstance and character defects. Two of the men deserve a measure of sympathy. A third is the blackest blackguard ever pictured, and this character, played to the hilt by Barry Fitzgerald, is a classic, well worth seeing for its perfection. The role of *Captain Thorbecke* is possibly more difficult because more complex, but it, too, is exceptionally well done by Oscar Homolka whom it is gratifying to see again in so strong a part. Lloyd Nolan as the deranged religious fanatic, illegally collecting pearls on his island kingdom, is sinister and compelling. It is not a happy story, dealing as it does with reckless courage, greed and desperation, but the unusual and splendid portrayals by the men in the cast make it intensely interesting. The sea catastrophes are as thrilling as possible—perhaps too thrilling to seem real—but this small defect will be overlooked by those who like strong drama well done.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very exciting and mature

Children, 8 to 12 Impossible

FIGHT FOR YOUR LADY » »

John Boles, Jack Oakie, Ida Lupino, Margot Grahame, Erik Rhodes. Story by Jean Negulesco and Isabel Leighton. Screen play by Ernest Pagano, Harry Segall and Harold Kusell. Directed by Ben Stoloff. R.K.O.

It is seldom that slapstick comedy attains real distinction, but in this hilarious play, John Boles and Jack Oakie succeed in raising it to this level. The story is too slight for coherent synopsis. It concerns the amorous adventures of a young opera tenor who goes to Hungary to forget an unhappy love affair and, on the advice of his physical trainer, makes love to a beautiful night club entertainer with the avowed intent of being challenged to a duel by her lover and so "put out of his misery." The jealous lover, "most distinguished swordsman in Hungary," accommodates him, and the trainer's efforts to prevent the duel furnish ridiculous complications. Admirers of John Boles will find him in an unfamiliar role here, but the touch of dignity with which he invests his absurd characterization gives individuality to the role and provides a delightful foil for Oakie's inspired antics. The play is good entertainment for the family's evening at the movies and should appeal alike to young and old.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good
Children, 8 to 12 Mature

FIT FOR A KING » »

Joe E. Brown, Helen Mack, Paul Kelly. Screen play by Richard Flournoy. An Edward Sedgwick production. R.K.O.

Here is an hilarious mixture of royal intrigue, romantic love, and slap-stick comedy. Even the exciting chase at the end is not omitted and it is all grand fun. Joe E. Brown trying to eat dinner on shipboard with a rough sea pounding, or perched high in the air endeavoring to drive a team of horses after the wagon and its front wheels have parted company will give any audience a laugh.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very amusing
Children, 8 to 12 Very funny

FORTY NAUGHTY GIRLS » »

James Gleason, Zasu Pitts, Marjorie Lord, George Shelley, Joan Woodbury, Alan Edwards. Story by Stuart Palmer. Screen play by John Grey. Direction by Edward Cline. R.K.O.

During a performance of a current musical hit, *Forty Naughty Girls,* attended by *Inspector Piper* and his girl friend *Hildegarde,* a murder is discovered back-stage. To *Piper's* annoyance his companion decides to do some snooping of her own, and in her inimitable way is effective in solving the case. While many amusing moments are afforded by the team of James Gleason and Zasu Pitts, much of the dialogue is dull and often the actors are making such an obvious effort to be funny that they fail to hit the mark.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mildly entertaining
Children, 8 to 12 No

THE GREAT GARRICK » »

Brian Aherne, Olivia de Haviland, Edward Everett Horton, Melville Cooper, Lionel Atwill, Luis Alberni, Fritz Leiber, Etienne Giradot, Dorothy Tree. Original screen play by Ernst Vajda. A James Whale Production directed by James Whale and personally supervised by Mervyn Le Roy. Warner Bros.

Whether or not the character of David Garrick as here presented is true to life, it makes rare entertainment and leaves a vivid impression of a temperamental but very likable individual, keenly intelligent, with tolerance, a sense of humor and great histrionic ability. The story is about actors. Garrick has been invited as guest artist to the Comedie Francaise. A rumor credits him with having stated that his purpose in accepting was to teach the company how to act. In retaliation, the enraged French artists plan a hoax to make Garrick appear ridiculous and so humiliate him that he will return to London. The satirical humor of the action is delicious. The cast plays with zest and fine ability. Luis Alberni, Melville Cooper, Etienne Giradot and Edward Everett Horton, not to mention several minor players, are particularly clever in their character roles. Olivia de Haviland is lovely and convincing as the one non-professional, and Brian Aherne does a magnificent job in a role which, in less capable hands, might have been a little silly or at least unsympathetic.

Although the story is pure fiction the settings and costumes give an authenticity which adds great interest. Drury Lane Theater in London and the Comedie Francaise in Paris are faithfully reproduced. Quaint inns of the middle eighteenth century with the customs and incidental accessories are interestingly pictured, and the delicate, lovely gowns of the ladies, the handsome suits of the men, wigs, laces, etc., are charming. Ernst Vadja has invented an unique plot. The director and cast have given the comedy a splendid presentation.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent
Children, 8 to 12 Yes

KING SOLOMON'S MINES » »

Roland Young, Paul Robeson, Anna Lee, John Loder, Cedric Hardwick. Story by H. Rider Haggard. Direction by Robert Stevenson. Gaumont-British.

Melodramatic and fantastic, after the manner of H. Rider Haggard's tales, this is not the sort of picture which commends itself to every audience. It concerns exciting adventure, an expedition into darkest Africa in search of diamond mines where black, savage adversaries must be terrorized by "magic" and overpowered by force. It is exciting, and the golden voice of Paul Robeson will attract music lovers. The cast is good and photography at times exceptionally beautiful.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Strenuous **Children, 8 to 12** No

LANCER SPY » »

Dolores Del Rio, George Sanders, Peter Lorre, Virginia Field, Sig Rumann, Jos. Schildkraut. From a novel by Marthe McKenna. Screen play by Philip Dunne. Directed by Gregory Ratoff. 20th Century-Fox.

In this World War, spy melodrama, a British soldier happens to be the double of a certain German prisoner of war. Assuming the identity of the German, he becomes a spy and is able to learn important military secrets of the enemy. While in Germany, he falls in love with a beautiful woman who, of course, is in the employ of the German secret service and who sacrifices herself to save him. As is the case in recent war pictures, all the characters are made to see more clearly than was common a few years ago how futile is the machinery of war. Even a German general voices pacifistic platitudes. Nevertheless the idea is developed that a man will kill, steal, or die in the service of his country. Little actual violence is pictured. Interest and excitement depend on the dangers encountered by a spy in enemy country, while uniforms and heel-clickings are used as atmospheric background. The acting and scenic effects are excellent and Dolores Del Rio is very lovely.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Questionable **Children, 8 to 12** No

LIFE BEGINS IN COLLEGE » »

The Ritz Brothers, Fred Stone, Joan Davis, Tony Martin, Gloria Stuart, Nat Pendleton, Dick Baldwin. Based on a short story by Darrell Ware. Screen play by Karl Tunberg and Don Ettlinger. Direction by William A. Seiter. 20th Century-Fox.

This belongs to the fall crop of campus musical comedies. The plot has the usual complications; the hero barred from play in the big game, the college in financial straits, a smirking purchasable dean, a double-crossing alumni manager, the game saved at the last moment by an absurd play, and of course a romance. The only new angles are that one of the team happens to be a rich Oklahoma Indian whose money is coveted by the college and that the Ritz Brothers appear on the football field in a surprise maneuver. Anyone who enjoys their clowning will probably enjoy the picture. Others will be bored.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Matter of taste **Children, 8 to 12** Passable

LOVE IS ON THE AIR » »

Ronald Reagan, June Travis, Eddie Acuff, Ben Welden, Raymond Hatton, Dickie Jones. From a story by Roy Chanslor. Direction by Nick Grinde. Warner Bros.

A light-opera title cloaks a shoddy, unpleasant, gangster melodrama in which the usual scenes of violence and conspiracy are followed by the overthrow of the vice lords. It all begins in a fairly entertaining manner when a young radio news commentator is demoted to the "kiddies hour," his endeavors in this field furnishing the only comedy element in a grim series of events. As frequently happens in pictures of this sort, the sensationalism of gun-play blots out any constructive lesson which may be intended.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

MADAM X » »

Gladys George, John Beal, Warren William, Reginald Owen, William Henry, Emma Dunn, Luis Alberni, Cora Witherspoon. Based on the play by Alexandre Bisson. Screen play by John Meehan. Directed by Sam Wood. M-G-M.

Ever since Alexandre Bisson's play was adapted for the American stage in 1919, *Madame X* has been almost constantly be-

fore the public, not always under her own name, but always more or less the same, a pitiful, tragic figure, suffering through the years for an early mis-step, yearning for the child torn from her arms in infancy, making at last the supreme sacrifice that blots out all the sordidness of her miserable life. The *Madam X* type of plot seems to be forever acceptable to lovers of tearful, emotional melodrama, and, when expertly and sincerely acted as in this latest revival, it is sure to be a winner at the box office. The notable cast headed by Gladys George gives a superb account of itself and makes the story seem real and very touching. The photography, settings, and dialogue are all exceptionally good.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too sordid and emotional — **Children, 8 to 12** No

✪

MUSIC FOR MADAME » »

Nino Martini, Alan Mowbray, Joan Fontaine, Alan Hale, Grant Mitchell. Original story by Robert Harari. Screen play by Gertrude Purcell and Robert Harari. Direction by John Blystone. Jesse Lasky production. R.K.O.

Nino Martini's fine voice and pleasing personality bring distinction to this musical production. The story is slight, improbable, and involved, a mixture of romance and comedy, in which an ingenuous immigrant mixes with Hollywood "high-life" and becomes a suspect when a valuable necklace disappears. It is simple, good fun which, in addition to its musical selections—operatic arias, Italian folk songs, and modern melodies—will no doubt have real appeal to youthful audiences. The scenes of the Hollywood Bowl at night add to the enjoyment of the production, and Alan Mowbray is highly amusing as *Rodowsky,* satirizing famous and temperamental orchestra directors.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good — **Children, 8 to 12** Good

✪

MY DEAR MISS ALDRICH » »

Edna May Oliver, Maureen O'Sullivan, Walter Pidgeon. Story and screen play by Herman Mankiewicz. Direction by George B. Seitz. M-G-M.

Edna May Oliver plays the *Miss Aldrich* of the title, a gruff and outspoken maiden lady who accompanies her niece *Martha* to New York when the latter inherits a newspaper. The editor being a woman-hater and the niece an ardent feminist, the challenge is soon made, and the rest of the film relates the adventures of *Martha* as a reporter covering an important labor situation. The dialogue is forced, as are some of the situations, and in spite of a good cast, there is nothing outstanding about the production which is lightly amusing but nothing more.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable — **Children, 8 to 12** Little interest

✪

OVER THE GOAL » »

June Travis, William Hopper, Johnnie Davis, Mabel Todd, Gordon Oliver, Members of the U.S.C. football squad. Direction by Noel Smith. First National.

With the exception of the sinister doings of unscrupulous lawyers whose clients' interests demand that a certain college lose its big game, "Over the Goal" is a naive college story and quite pleasant. It shows the U.S.C. football squad in action and has some amusing scenes apropos of student pranks. The plot is the stock one about the boy who enters the game in the last quarter and scores fourteen points practically unaided and in spite of his injured knee. The acting is rather stilted but the hero is a likable young man.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining — **Children, 8 to 12** Passable

✪

PARTNERS IN CRIME » »

Lynne Overman, Roscoe Karns, Muriel Hutchinson, Porter Hall. Based on a novel by Kurt Steele. Direction by Ralph Murphy. Paramount.

Definitely a Class B picture, "Partners in Crime" concerns itself with blackmailers, shady politicians, and other undesirable people who participate in a coup to place an alien in the office of mayor of the town. Treated in a comic vein which improves the value in no way, it is a cheap, rather stupid, and quite distasteful affair.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Poor — **Children, 8 to 12** No

✪

THE PERFECT SPECIMEN » »

Errol Flynn, Joan Blondell, Hugh Herbert, Edward Everett Horton, Beverly Roberts, May Robson, Allen Jenkins. From a story by Samuel Hopkins Adams. Screen play by Norman Reilly Raine, Lawrence Riley, Brewster Morse and Fritz Falkenstein. Direction by Michael Curtiz. First National-Warner Bros.

This is a thoroughly amusing farce attempting in hilarious fashion to prove that porridge tastes better when not eaten with a golden spoon. A tyrannical old woman tries

to educate her grandson so that he will be the perfect specimen of manhood to head the thirty-million-dollar estate he will one day inherit. He is perfectly docile until he meets a girl who convinces him that he should follow the example of Don Quixote and tilt a few windmills on his own. The players scamper around from one place to another with a speed which might suggest a break in the continuity, but such is not the case. Clever plotting keeps the story coherent from beginning to end, and an exceedingly apt cast makes the most of witty, unexpected lines. In their respective roles, Mr. Flynn is thoroughly charming, Miss Blondell less flamboyant than usual, Miss Robson a delightfully contentious character, and Mr. Horton, Hugh Herbert, and Allen Jenkins absurdly "balmy."

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Sophisticated — **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature

✪

SATURDAY'S HEROES » »

Van Heflin, Marian Marsh, Richard Lane, Alan Bruce, Minor Watson. Screen play by Paul Yawitz, Charles Kaufman, David Silverstein. Story by George Templeton. Direction by Edward Killy. R.K.O.

Developing the thesis that professionalism in college football should be made legitimate, this film presents the argument that as long as colleges make money on their football teams, the players are justified in sharing in the profits. *Val*, the hero, is caught ticket scalping and expelled from his college. Having convinced the president of a rival college that, under the existing system of "athletic scholarships," he should not be blamed for ignoring the rule against selling tickets at a profit, he agrees to develop a winning team with the understanding that the players are to be paid for their efforts. When the team wins by a fluke, *Val* is supposed to have established himself as a crusader for clean sports. The acting and direction are slightly better than the story.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Unethical — **Children, 8 to 12** No

✪

THERE GOES THE GROOM » »

Ann Sothern, Burgess Meredith, Mary Boland, Onslow Stevens. Story by David Garth. Screen play by S. K. Lausen, Dorothy Yost, Harold Kusel. Direction by Joseph Santley. R.K.O.

When a farce is not funny it is indeed a sad affair. Such is "There Goes the Groom." The cast is made up of excellent players but the story is extremely poor. Burgess Meredith as *Dick Mathews* is a young man who returns from Alaska with a yacht and a gold mine to present to his sweetheart. Upon finding her engaged to another man he plans to go away but the girls' family, with their eyes on his fortune, use every possible means to coerce him into marrying the other daughter. His efforts to escape and theirs to detain him are boring.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too sophisticated — **Children, 8 to 12** No

✪

THIS WAY PLEASE » »

Charles "Buddy" Rogers, Betty Grable, Ned Sparks, Jim and Marian Jordan, Lee Bowman, Mary Livingstone. Direction by Robert Florey. Paramount.

Curiosity to see radio stars on the screen may attract patrons to this production but many will be disappointed. The story is set in a motion picture theater where *Brad Morgan* (Buddy Rogers) is packing in feminine audiences with an elaborate musical stage act. He falls in love with a new usherette, they quarrel and are reconciled, while slap-stick humor pads the action. Radio and screen may complement each other but in our opinion radio stars as a rule had better keep to their own metier.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Harmless but no value — **Children, 8 to 12** No value

✪

WEST OF SHANGHAI » »

Reviewed under title "War Lord" in August issue.

✪

THE WOMEN MEN MARRY » »

George Murphy, Josephine Hutchinson, Cliff Edwards, Claire Dodd, Sidney Blackmer. Direction by Errol Taggart. M-G-M.

A newspaper reporter discovers that while he has been absent investigating the cult of "Brother Nameless," his wife has been too well entertained by his boss. Thus the picture combines a story of marital infidelity with a melodramatic, newspaper detective yarn. Heavy drinking, murder, hanging, and divorce complete the distasteful atmosphere.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Impossible — **Children, 8 to 12** Impossible

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FEATURE FILMS

BACK-STAGE ◇ ◇

Anna Neagle, Arthur Tracy, Tilly Losch. Direction by Herbert Wilcox. Gaumont-British.

This comedy of stage life tells of the romance of a chorus girl in a London musical show. She hears a man's thrilling voice singing in the street under her window and gets him a part in her company. The street singer, Arthur Tracy, makes an immediate hit, but deserts both show and girl and leaves for a concert tour as soon as his reputation is made. Most of the musical comedy is screened, thus crowding out the flimsy plot. The two principals are not equal to making a fine production from such material. The supporting cast is undistinguished, with the exception of Tilly Losch, Viennese dancer, and the direction lacks fluency and pace. Some of the musical numbers and dances are good but on the whole the production is disappointing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable **Children, 8 to 12** No interest

⊛

THE BARRIER ◇ ◇

Leo Carrillo, Jean Parker, Jimmy Ellison, Otto Kruger, Robert Barrat, Andy Clyde. Original story by Rex Beach. Screen play by Barnard Schubert. Direction by Les Selander. Paramount.

Romantic melodrama by Rex Beach, the old theme of love and revenge in the frozen north, should be interesting, but some of the vitality of the original story is lost in the screen interpretation. A "barrier" of blood, creed, and background is challenged by the love of a young lieutenant for *Necia,* who is believed to be part Indian, and the problem is solved only when the girl's inheritance is proved to be acceptable after all. The most poignant character in the picture is *Poleon Doret,* the trapper, who loves *Necia* but effaces himself from her life in order that she may marry the young lieutenant. With the exception of Leo Carrillo, who plays this role with great artistry, and Otto Kruger, who gives an excellent portrayal of a despicable character, the actors are stilted and unreal. The film is pictorially beautiful but dramatically inferior.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable **Children, 8 to 12** No

⊛

BEHIND THE MIKE ◇ ◇

William Gargan, Judith Barrett, Don Wilson, Sterling Holloway. Story by Thomas Ahearn and Walton Butterfield. Screen play by Barry Trivers. Direction by Sidney Salkow. Universal.

Another tiresome radio picture is added to the list in a noisy and trivial story of a young performer who is demoted because of a violent temper. The story is barely coherent, consisting of a succession of fist fights and

raucous declamations before a microphone. Production values are generous, leaving a regret that they could not have been saved for a better yarn.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Waste of time **Children, 8 to 12** Poor

BORROWING TROUBLE ◇ ◇

Jed Prouty, Shirley Deane, Spring Byington, Russell Gleason, Kenneth Howell, George Ernest, June Carlson, Florence Roberts, Billy Mahan, Marvin Stephens. Play by Robert Chapin and Karen DeWolf. Based on the characters created by Katharine Kavanaugh. Direction by Frank R. Strayer. 20th Century-Fox.

Young *Roger*, who is one of the most attractive members of the *Jones* family, has an important hand in this episode, although the moment of chief dramatic importance occurs at the wedding of his sister *Bonnie*. Through the *Big Brother* organization, *Tommy McGuire*, hitherto an incorrigible urchin, is brought into the home circle, and mainly through *Roger's* influence becomes a decent, dependable person. As in the other *Jones* pictures, the characters talk and behave like real people, interesting people we are glad to know. In this one a constructive attitude towards social problems is included with the entertainment of the hour.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

THE BRIDE WORE RED ◇ ◇

Joan Crawford, Franchot Tone, Robert Young, Billie Burke, Reginald Owen, Lynne Carver. Original story by Ferenc Molnar. Screen play by Tess Slesinger and Bradbury Foote. Direction by Dorothy Arzner. M.G.M.

An eccentric Italian nobleman, to test his theory that all men are equal, gives a barmaid in a cheap cabaret two weeks outing at a luxurious hotel, with money for all the accouterments of a lady. This provides light, amusing entertainment, an escape from reality, but it is insignificant because the denouement is accomplished by mere incident rather than by character development. The implications of the drama are not wholesome, but for the most part they will be overlooked since the story is light, the situations amusing, the backgrounds beautiful, and the acting good. A "Cinderella" theme always has appeal. Mature audiences may find a thought-provoking idea under the comedy and tinsel.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended **Children, 8 to 12** No

BULLDOG DRUMMOND'S REVENGE ◇

John Barrymore, Louise Campbell, John Howard, E. E. Clive, Reginald Denny. Based on "The Return of Bulldog Drummond" by H. C. McNeile. Direction by Louis King. Paramount.

This is a much better picture than its immediate predecessor with the same cast. Some of the devices are time-honored, such as the careless tossing about of a case of deadly explosive which is about to detonate at any moment. However, a good company with a high degree of enthusiasm puts spontaneity into many situations. The plot concerns the activities of an international purveyor of explosives stolen from munitions chemists and his ultimate detection by the trusty forces of Scotland Yard. Photography is good, and a special interest is added by scenes aboard the train ferry from Dover to Calais.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Depends on individual **Children, 8 to 12** Too gruesome

CARNIVAL QUEEN ◇ ◇

Robert Wilcox, Dorothea Kent, Hobart Cavanaugh, G. Pat Collins, Ernest Cossart. Based on the novel "Love in the Mud" by Richard Wormser. Screen play by James Mulhauser and Harold Buckley. Direction by Nate Watt. Universal.

A plot which is original enough to warrant an entertaining film is rendered futile by second rate treatment. A rattle-brained young thing inherits a carnival, and is attracted to one of the performers whom she raises to the status of manager. Then she joins the company incognito and unearths information leading to the arrest of a group of robbers traveling with the show as concession men. On the whole the acting is labored and the direction feeble. There are some good bits of comedy, but even these are few and far between.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable **Children, 8 to 12** Too many undesirable characters

CONQUEST ◇ ◇

Greta Garbo, Charles Boyer, Reginald Owen, Alan Marshal, Henry Stephenson, Leif Erickson, Dame May Whitty. Based on a book by Waclaw Gasiorowski. Screen play by Samuel Hoffenstein, Salka Viertel and S. W. Behrman. Direction by Clarence Brown. M.G.M.

In "Conquest," the movies have created the spirit of history and given us, if not literal facts, at least a memorable impression of a melodramatic era and that melodramatic hero, Napoleon. Charles Boyer dominates the picture in the leading role, while Miss Garbo of necessity has a subsidiary part. The plot concerns a love affair between *Napoleon* and *Madame Walewska*, a beautiful Polish Countess. He sees her when she goes to pay homage to the man she believes the savior of her country. When the politicians realize that he is attracted to her, they urge her to use this fact to help her country. Against her husband's wishes she continues the intimacy, and her marriage is dissolved. *Napoleon* changes her worship of him as a hero to love for him as a lonely man, and an

affair develops which endures even though his overweaning ambition forces him to his downfall and shatters her ideals. Although slow moving at times, the production is dignified and beautiful. The introductory scenes are thrillingly dramatic when the Cossacks wreak vengeance in the gorgeous home of *Count Walewska,* and the magnificent settings give a vivid picture of the luxury of court life. *Napoleon's* many victories and defeats are spectacularly shown, the tragic retreat from Moscow being especially impressive. Charles Boyer's *Napoleon* is very fine, Greta Garbo gives a distinguished characterization of the Countess, and Henry Stephenson and Reginald Owen are exceptionally good in their roles.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature — **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature

✠

DARK JOURNEY ◇ ◇

Conrad Veidt, Vivien Leigh. Original story by Lajor Biro. Direction by Victor Saville. London Films. U.A.

This film tells a stereotyped story of a romance between secret agents of Germany and France. The pair, torn between love and duty, stage their activities in Stockholm. The plot is complicated by the efforts of the local police to maintain their neutrality and by the counter-espionage service of the English. Miss Leigh has the role of a French spy who becomes a part of the German organization and furnishes them with misleading information. The principals give good portrayals, but the supporting cast is somewhat wooden, and the English actors have difficulty in imitating the traits of other nationalities. The intricate plot is choppy and makes the action difficult to follow. Photography is excellent, particularly in the sequence showing the sinking of an enemy submarine by a British "mystery ship." The picture is only mildly interesting.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable — **Children, 8 to 12** No interest

✠

DREAMING LIPS ◇ ◇

Elizabeth Bergner, Raymond Massey, Romney Brent. From the play "Melo" by Henri Bernstein. Direction by Paul Czinner. Trafalgar Films production. U.A.

It is hard to evaluate Elizabeth Bergner's artistic status from the films in which she has been seen. Her parts seem to have been chosen to fit her child-like and immature personality, and perhaps her tragic passages stand out the more by contrast. The current offering is a version of the old familiar triangle. Miss Bergner as *Gaby,* her husband's spoiled darling, falls in love at first sight with his old friend *Michael,* a concert violinist. *Gaby* and *Michael* enter upon a reckless liason which soon ends in tragedy. The plot is unconvincing, at times mawkish, but has its moments of drama. As the lover, Mr. Massey with his dark and brooding personality is a good foil for the winsome *Gaby.* Settings and photography are unusually good and great credit is due Director Czinner for his subtle handling of a slight story. Miss Bergner is thrilling at times but does not succeed in lifting the play to greatness.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No — **Children, 8 to 12** No interest

✠

52nd STREET ◇ ◇

Ian Hunter, Kenny Baker, Leo Carrillo, Pat Paterson, Ella Logan, Zasu Pitts, Dorothy Peterson, Sid Silvers. Screen play by Grover Jones. Direction by Harold Young. United Artists.

Authentic atmosphere and good acting are wasted in an unconvincing story. The film tells how a certain aristocratic New Yorker recoups a lost fortune by operating a speakeasy which becomes a fashionable night club, and how all his family are induced to lay aside their prejudices against the encroachments of "night-life" in their conservative residential district. The whole tone of the picture is rather cheap.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Unsuitable — **Children, 8 to 12** No

✠

FORTY-FIVE FATHERS ◇ ◇

Jane Withers, Thomas Beck, Louise Henry, The Hartmans, Richard Carle. Original story by Mary Bickel. Screen play by Frances Hyland and Albert Ray. Direction by James Tinling. 20th Century-Fox.

Undoubtedly the best of the Jane Withers comedies to date, this is an absurdly funny story of an orphaned child who becomes the ward of forty-five elderly members of the "Spear & Gun Club," to which her father had belonged. She is a precocious little girl who interferes in the affairs of grown-ups, but her pranks may be excused because of the well meaning spirit behind them. The scene where her ventriloquist friends use their skill to confuse the Court during a breach of promise suit is hilarious and so well done that it seems really plausible. The cast is excellent, and "Gertrude," the monkey, deserves special mention.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good — **Children, 8 to 12** Good

✠

HEIDI ◇ ◇

Shirley Temple, Jean Hersholt, Arthur Treacher, Helen Westley, Mary Nash, Delmar Watson, Marcia Mae Jones. Original story by Johanna Spyri. Screen play by Walter Ferris and Julien Josephson. Direction by Allan Dwan. 20th Century-Fox.

"Heidi" is a classic among children's books. It has been translated into many languages since it was first printed in Germany in 1881, and is still a best seller. It is the simple story of a little Swiss girl whose beautiful char-

acter and winning ways bring harmony to those around her. The role is ideally suited to Shirley Temple, for her spontaneous gaiety, her charm and ability make her a perfect *Heidi*, and she is lovely indeed in the beautiful setting of the Swiss Alps and in the quaint German town of old-time Franfort. It would seem as though the plot of the book were sufficiently inspiring for any picture, for what could be more dramatic than the healing of *Klara* after the joy of living has been restored to her by *Heidi*? Unfortunately the motion picture resorts to melodrama: a kidnapping, a jail experience for the grandfather, a wild chase to rescue *Heidi* from gypsies—all quite extraneous to the spirit of the original. These are jarring notes in a production which is otherwise lovely and to which children will look forward with all the enthusiasm the book inspired. It will be difficult to explain to them why the changes were deemed necessary. Nevertheless, the picture is delightful and will place Shirley Temple again in first place as the creator of childhood heroines.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Good unless too exciting for some.

✠

HIGH FLYERS ◇ ◇

Bert Wheeler, Robert Woolsey, Lupe Velez, Marjorie Lord, Margaret Demont, Jack Carson, Paul Harvey. Original story by Victor Mapes. Screen play by Benny Rubin, Bert Granet, Byron Morgan. Direction by Edward Cline. R.K.O.

The story is banal and unimportant, even for a farce, but the acting is adequate for the type of picture, and the impersonations by the principals are sufficiently amusing. The real star of the picture is the dog. The film is a typical Wheeler and Woolsey farce, a hodgepodge of bathing beauties, careening aeroplanes, jewel smugglers, and slapstick comedians.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Poor

Children, 8 to 12 Worthless

✠

HOLD 'EM NAVY ◇ ◇

Lew Ayres, Mary Carlisle, John Howard, Benny Baker, Elizabeth Patterson. Story by Erwin Gelsey and Lloyd Corrigan. Direction by Kurt Neumann. Paramount.

The height of the football season is the proper time for pigskin encounters on the screen, and where can one find a better setting than the U. S. Naval Academy with its wealth of tradition and good comradeship, its glamour of uniforms and parade grounds? This is lighter than some of the films of Annapolis, but it is fresh and attractive, with a good cast. Lew Ayres plays the spoiled stripling who is developed and hardened into a worth while character as the months go by. John Howard is equally pleasing as his rival in love and on the football field, and although Mary Carlisle is something of a featherweight, she is a joyous object of affection in the boy-and-girl love affair.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Fairly interesting

✠

THE HURRICANE ◇ ◇

Dorothy Lamour, Mary Astor, Thomas Mitchell, John Carradine, Jon Hall, C. Aubrey Smith, Raymond Massey, Jerome Cowan. Original story by Charles Nordhoff and James Norman Hall. Screen play by Dudley Nichols. Direction by John Ford. Musical accompaniment by Alfred Newman. Samuel Goldwyn-United Artists.

Seldom has the shrieking violence of a South Seas' hurricane been so realistically presented as in this tropical romance. On the little island of *Manukura*, a colony of natives and a few whites undergo the fury of wind while the seas break over their poor possessions. In the deafening howling of the gale, trees and houses are swept away, and but a handful of survivors live to see the placid dawn of another day. The story begins with the native wedding ceremonies of *Terangi* and *Marama* in an idyllic setting, but soon the groom is arrested and sent to prison at Tahiti on a minor charge. In spite of the efforts of his white friends who know that the islanders cannot endure confinement, the relentless law is enforced. Jon Hall as *Terangi* makes endless attempts to escape, only to add to the length of his sentence. His feats of swimming and diving are truly remarkable, and his final escape in a small boat through tropical seas is grippingly realistic. The others in the cast give excellent performances, particularly Raymond Massey as the Governor and Thomas Mitchell as the Doctor. The musical accompaniment by Alfred Newman is perfect for the tropical setting. The events of the storm are wonderfully directed, even to the minor incidents of slamming windows and rattling shutters when the wind begins; but the roaring din of the hurricane, however realistic, is too loud and long for sensitive ears. In the peaceful moments, the island scenes are indescribably lovely, and the clash between tense melodrama and tender love and friendship makes the film outstanding of its kind.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 No, too violent

✠

THE LADY FIGHTS BACK ◇ ◇

Kent Taylor, Irene Hervey, William Lundigen, Willie Best. Original story by Arthur Stringer. Direction by Milton Carruth. Universal.

A conflict of ideas between a handsome young engineer and the pretty hostess of a salmon fishing club, furnishes the motif of this film. Kent Taylor as the engineer is attempting to build a dam which would ruin the fishing. The story tells how the young

man outwits the lady, although she does everything in her power to block his designs. The interest of the picture focuses on the beautiful scenery rather than the characters, who seem forced and unconvincing in their roles. The plot is light and the banter lacks spontaneity, but when the camera shows schools of salmon leaping in the stream, or shots of construction work on the dam, interest is revived.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

LIVE, LOVE AND LEARN ◇ ◇

Robert Montgomery, Rosalind Russell, Robert Benchley, Helen Vinson, Monty Woolley, E. E. Clive, Mickey Rooney, Charles Judels. Original story by Helen Grace Carlisle. Screen play by Charles Brackett, Cyril Hume and Richard Maibaum. Direction by George Fitzmaurice. M.G.M.

Clever acting, smart dialogue and a measure of real significance underneath its farcical front, make this picture highly entertaining. It is the story of a fine artist whose head is turned when he becomes the fashion among the wealthy social set; and of his debutante wife who has given up luxury to live on love in a garret, and who realizes that her artist husband has sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. It is an amusing tale to fill an idle hour.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature, sophisticated **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature

LIVING ON LOVE ◇ ◇

James Dunn, Whitney Bourne, Joan Woodbury, Sally Ward, Tom Kennedy, Franklin Pangborn. Based on a novel by John Wells. Screen play by Franklin Coon. Direction by Lew Landers. R.K.O.

Impecunious *Mary* and *Gary* share a basement room in an apartment house, and all is proper as the Y. W. C. A. Explanation: the girl works in the daytime and the man at night, and the hours of residence never overlap. The stage is set for a clever play, but situations are developed in a stereotyped manner, characters lack reality, and real comedy is superceded by slapstick. It is only moderately entertaining at the best.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Little value **Children, 8 to 12** Unsuitable

LOOK OUT, MR. MOTO ◇ ◇

Peter Lorre, Rochelle Hudson, Robert Kent, J. Edward Bromberg. Original story by Willis Cooper and Norman Foster. Direction by Norman Foster. 20th Century-Fox.

This melodrama of the Siamese jungle is overcrowded with thrills. An American aviatrix, a Japanese secret agent, a native Rajah and a high priest all become involved in a gun-running plot in the jungle. Peter Lorre as *Mr. Moto* is good as usual, and the supporting cast is adequate for the needs of the story . The plot, though far-fetched, is sufficiently amusing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Questionable **Children, 8 to 12** No

MERRY-GO-ROUND OF 1938 ◇ ◇

Jimmy Savo, Bert Lahr, Micha Auer, Billy House, Alice Brady, Marge Brullow. Direction by Irving Cummings. Universal.

The cast and the director, flashed upon the screen, arouse interest as an introduction for Universal's "Merry-Go-Round of 1938." The stage is set—let the play go on! But as it unfolds utter confusion for the onlooker results. What is its purpose? Why the effort expended? If the plot can be untangled correctly, it is the story of four vaudeville comics who adopt a child whose mother is killed in a hazardous act. Time passes, and the child is seen as a pretty girl, apparently an actress, who is in love with a wealthy youth, the son of a scatter-brained social snob played with her usual flair by Alice Brady. Discovering the girl's profession, she reacts as is to be expected, and the play becomes a slapstick comedy as the four godfathers masquerade in women's clothes, as Swamis, and in other guises to change her flighty mind. There are occasional bits of rare satire, but on the whole the production must have greatly confused Mr. Cummings, whose former efforts, as we recall them, never followed this curious route. It leaves the spectator as befuddled as after a real merry-go-round ride, and thus perhaps it justifies the title.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Nothing objectionable **Children, 8 to 12** No value but type of humor will appeal

MISSING WITNESSES ◇ ◇

John Litel, Dick Pursell, Jean Dale, Raymond Hatton, Harlan Tucker. Screen play by Kenneth Gamet and Don Ryan. Direction by William Clemens. Warner Bros.

The splendid achievement of Special Prosecutor Thomas E. Dewey in cleaning up the rackets in New York City is used as the basis of this film which presents the very problems he encountered when the victims of the underworld refused to testify for fear of reprisals. Baffled and hindered at every turn, the prosecutor, who for the sake of fiction is *Inspector Lane* of the picture, follows the dimmest trails of evidence until a stroke of luck puts him in touch with the "Big Shots" of industrialized crime. It is impossible to make a gangster film without violence and brutality, but here they are held to a minimum. It is a well-acted, convincing account of a phase of contemporary history.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature **Children, 8 to 12** No indeed

NIGHT CLUB SCANDAL ◇ ◇

John Barrymore, Lynne Overman, Charles Bickford, Louise Campbell, Harvey Stephens. Direction by Ralph Murphy. Paramount.

The customary technique in producing a murder story is reversed in this instance, as the actual details of the crime are disclosed in the opening scene. The audience being on the "inside," is interested mainly in the machinations of the criminal to fasten the guilt upon his worst enemy. John Barrymore, in the unpleasant part of the doctor who has murdered his wife, gives such a good performance that he evokes a degree of sympathy. Police detectives, a gangster and his wife, a typical hard-boiled reporter, and an innocent girl complete the cast. The plot is plausible and well handled for the type of film.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too sordid and sophisticated

Children, 8 to 12 No

✠

SHE LOVED A FIREMAN ◇ ◇

Dick Foran, Ann Sheridan, Robert Armstrong. Play by Carlton Sand and Morton Grant. Direction by John Farrow. First National.

The story is one of the stock variety about two men who fight for a girl, and is of secondary importance. The main value of the film consists in the description of the life of a fireman, showing the responsibility, discipline and high courage required in such a calling. Towards the end there is a very thrilling scene of a burning building, climaxed by the heroic rescue of *Smoky* by his rival, *Red*. Of course the best man wins the girl.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Interesting

Children, 8 to 12 Too exciting

✠

STAND-IN ◇ ◇

Leslie Howard, Joan Blondell, Humphrey Bogart, Alan Mowbray, Marla Shelton, C. Henry Gordon. Original story by Clarence Buddington Kelland. Screen play by Gene Towne and Graham Baker. Direction by Tay Garnett. United Artists.

This is a pleasing comedy drama of a "genius" type of young man who is a financial expert and who is sent to straighten out the affairs of a big studio. He is a sort of "babe-in-the-woods," but is befriended by Joan Blondell as the "stand-in" for the star at the studio. Interest in the picture is derived from the actors rather than from the story. The film is, however, an extremely enjoyable comedy.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Mature

TEXAS TRAIL ◇ ◇

William Boyd, George Hayes, Russell Hayden, Judith Allen, Alexander Cross, Billy King, Rafael Bennett. Original story by Clarence E. Mulford. Screen play by Jack O'Donnell. Direction by Dave Sellman. Paramount.

Commissioned by the army to bring in five hundred wild horses, *Hopalong Cassidy* succeeds in spite of rustlers who try to spoil his plans. He teaches the Major's son fair play and sportsmanship into the bargain. This is an unassuming program film which is nevertheless fast moving and convincing, with a likable hero, less romance than usual, gorgeous scenery, and fine riding.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Good if not too stimulating

✠

THE THIRTEEN ◇ ◇

Ivan Novoselstev, Helen Kuzmina, Alexei Chistiakov, Arsen Fait, Olya Kuznetsov. Andrei Dolinin. Screen play by Ivan Prut. Direction by Mikhail Romm.

A little band of soldiers of the Russian Red Army are making their way home across the desert after their term of service on the Afghan border. A troop of raiders besiege them at an abandoned fort, and one by one they are shot down until rescue comes to the two survivors. The story is a thrilling tale of privation and death amid the windswept dunes of the desert. Direction and photography are outstanding among Russian pictures. Most striking of sequences is the scene when the two survivors fire bursts from their machine guns to break the monotony of waiting and to take the place of conversation which their parched throats can no longer endure. The film shows an incident of border warfare rather than a complete story, and is too long for the material. The usual Russian propaganda is conspicuously lacking. Dialogue is in Russian with English titles.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No, too much killing

Children, 8 to 12 No

✠

THUNDER TRAIL ◇ ◇

Gilbert Roland, Marsha Hunt, Charles Bickford, Monte Blue, James Craig. Based on a novel by Zane Grey. Screen play by Robert Yost and Stuart Anthony. Paramount.

The opening passage is superior to the main part of the film, picturing a raid on returning forty-niners with the stark brutality of frontier days. There is the inception of an interesting plot when two brothers are separated to be raised by contrasting foster fathers. Thereafter the picture deteriorates into the usual wild melodrama with fighting and plunder. It comes to such an abrupt finish that the literal-minded "western" addicts will feel a sense of frustration. Photography of mountain scenes with exceptionally fine cloud effects deserves comment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair

Children, 8 to 12 Too violent

THE WESTLAND CASE ◇ ◇

Preston Foster, Frank Jenks, Carol Hughes, Barbara Pepper, Astrid Allwyn, Clarence Wilson. From the novel "Headed For a Hearse" by Jonathan Latimer. Screen play by Robertson White. Direction by Christy Cabanne. Universal.

"Be nonchalant" is carried to such an extreme in this Crime Club story that even the prisoner, saved from execution at the last second, trots off gayly with his stenographer without so much as a thank-you-sir to those who have rescued him. The plot is so complicated that much of it remains a mystery after the final flicker. Although Preston Foster's personality is genial, his influence is bad, for the reason that he manages to outsmart all his associates while they are cold sober and he is deep in his cups. As for the flapper edition of May West, she adds nothing to the morals or originality of the plot.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Poor **Children, 8 to 12** Impossible

WITHOUT WARNING ◇ ◇

Boris Karloff, Marie Wilson, Eddie Craven, Eddie Acuff, Regis Toomey, Henry Kolker. Original story by Ralph Spencer Zink. Screen play by Crane Wilbur. Direction by John Farrow. Warner Brothers.

A dark and foggy night provides a mysterious background for this murder mystery, and there is an obvious but unsuccessful attempt to establish an atmosphere of dread. When a man is murdered at an army post on an isolated island, *Jevries* (Boris Karloff), because of his past record, comes under suspicion. The story describes the investigation of the murder by the officers at the post. A comedy situation arises when one of the privates smuggles his bride of a few hours onto the forbidden island and the young couple become involved in the mystery. The story is somewhat colorless, although suspense is maintained and a logical ending is achieved.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Unsuitable **Children, 8 to 12** No

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FEATURE FILMS

ALCATRAZ ISLAND ◇ ◇

Ann Sheridan, John Litel, Mary Maguire, Gordon Oliver, Dick Purcell, Vladimir Sokoloff, Addison Richards, Ben Welden. Original Screen play by Crane Wilbur. Direction by William McGann. Warner Brothers.

When a gangster, *Gat Brady,* is told by the head of a fashionable school that his daughter is no longer acceptable among her carefully selected charges, he is given food for thought, and when Federal agents nab him and hustle him into prison for evading the income tax, he begins to look upon his past with misgivings. Finally when, accused of a prison murder he did not commit, he escapes the electric chair through the quick thinking of a D. A. who providentially loves his daughter, he reaches the conclusion that there are more valuable assets in life than an ill-gotten bank account. For those who are interested in life at Alcatraz prison and the emotional reactions of a racketeer, this is good entertainment, well acted, suspenseful and realistic. John Litel as *Gat* gives a commendable performance.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Unsuitable **Children, 8 to 12** No

ALI BABA GOES TO TOWN ◇ ◇

Eddie Cantor, Tony Martin, Roland Young, June Lang, Louise Hovick, John Carradine, Virginia Field, Alan Dinehart, Douglas Dumbrille, Raymond Scott Quintet, Peters Sisters, Jeni Le Gon. Screen play by Harry Tugend and Jack Yellen based on a story by Gene Towne, Graham Baker and Gene Fowler. Music and lyrics by Mack Gordon and Harry Revel. Direction by David Butler. 20th Century-Fox.

Eddie Cantor's new picture is nonsense of the sort that will appeal to those who want to forget reality and frolic in the world of make-believe. To augment his collection of famous autographs, he goes to Hollywood, and, as an unsophisticated rustic, is pitched literally into the midst of a movie company on location, and finds himself signing a contract for a minor role. The company is producing "The Forty Thieves," and the atmosphere of Bagdad entrances the young greenhorn. Under the influence of a drug he falls asleep and dreams he is prime minister to a sultan. Anything can happen in a dream and the script-writers make the most of their license to perform feats with a magic carpet,

introduce beautiful princesses of the harem, and play modern American pranks in Oriental setting. There are some mild wisecracks at the expense of the present administration, some rollicking songs and gay costumes. The cast evidently enjoy their roles, and the exuberance of the acting tides the story over a few weaknesses of plot.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining **Children, 8 to 12** Passable

✠

THE AWFUL TRUTH ◇ ◇

Irene Dunne, Cary Grant, Ralph Bellamy, Alexander D'Arcy, Joyce Compton, Esther Dale, Cecil Cunningham. Screen play by Vina Delmar. Based on a play by Arthur Richman. Direction by Leo McCarey. Columbia.

When a man comes home from a trip and finds his wife away, divorce is not inevitable. But when he brings four friends with him and they are all there to greet her when she finally appears with another man, what can they do but get a divorce, even though they happen still to be in love? How a gay young couple deal with such a situation is uproariously illustrated in this clever farce. The lines are original, sophisticated and witty, and fully complemented by the absurdly funny situations and the whirlwind tempo. Irene Dunne is particularly charming, and Cary Grant and Ralph Bellamy are ideal as the other two members of a perfectly ridiculous triangle. The only drawback to this picture is that the laughter of the audience drowns out some of the lines.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Sophisticated **Children, 8 to 12** No

✠

BIG TOWN GIRL ◇ ◇

Claire Trevor, Donald Woods, Alan Dinehart, Alan Baxter. Screen play by Lou Breslow and John Patrick, Robert Ellis and Helen Logan. Based on original stories by Darrell Ware and Frances Whiting Reid. Direction by Alfred Worker. 20th Century-Fox.

The opening scene of this picture shows a bank robber escaping from the train on which he is being taken to prison. Next we see his wife who desires to be free to make an honest living. She finds employment as a singer in the music department of a small town store, is discovered by a talent scout, and becomes the famous "masked countess" of the radio. The husband, of course, tries to find her. Various mix-ups and coincidences result while he robs banks, flees from the police, and pursues the mysterious countess who is by this time in love with a reporter. It is all perfectly silly and a waste of time.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

BLOSSOMS ON BROADWAY ◇ ◇

Edward Arnold, Shirley Ross, John Trent, Joe Weber, Lew Fields, Rufe Davis. Screen play by Theodore Reeves. Direction by Richard Wallace. Paramount.

A delirious farce in poor taste. *Ira Collins,* a promotor with doubtful ethics and watched by the police, meets *Sally Shea,* also a shady character, and decides to use her to fleece a Western girl who is owner of a gold mine. The two meet a gas magnate who is hoarding gold and willing to use his gold in the mine to have it remined on a commission basis. They are all caught by a G-man posing as *Sally's* chauffeur, in love with her of course, and after a farcical trial which attempts to copy Gilbert and Sullivan humor, *Sally* is excused as "too pretty to be put in jail." Edward Arnold wastes his ability in this hodgepodge of farce and vaudeville. The other roles are burlesqued to the point of absurdity. The production seems planned to show off the different tricks of the comedians, Joe Weber, Lew Fields and Rufe Davis, but the result is unsuccessful as entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Waste of time **Children, 8 to 12** No

✠

BOY OF THE STREETS ◇ ◇

Jackie Cooper, Maurine O'Connor. Direction by William Nigh. Monogram.

While "Dead End" may have been the inspiration for this picture, "Boy of the Streets" is not a weak copy and will have greater public appeal perhaps because it is not so bitter nor so hopelessly pessimistic in its finale. It pictures a boy gang leader whose philosophy of life has been formed by emulating his father, an optimistic "organizer" who thinks that manual labor is beneath him but that brains will bring him a living "soon." The boy is disillusioned about his parent's standing in the district, and in his bitter state of mind he becomes an easy prey of a real gang of criminals. His first experience with them results in tragedy, but due to the sympathetic understanding of the police, another chance is offered him. The plot carries a definite social lesson and it is presented naturally and honestly. It is human and not sentimental and it is distinctly good entertainment as well. No millennium is painted but a hope is suggested that a bright underprivileged boy can reshape his life outside the slum environment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Interesting **Children, 8 to 12** No; too mature

CHARLIE CHAN AT MONTE CARLO ◇ ◇

Warner Oland, Keye Luke, Virginia Field, Sidney Blackmer. Original story by Robert Ellis and Helen Logan. Screen play by Robert Ellis and Jerry Cady. Direction by Eugene Forde. 20th Century-Fox.

The *Chan* mysteries place emphasis on solving the mystery rather than on the horror angle. They are usually amusing in dialogue, fast moving in action and full of suspense. This is not one of the best. There is some confusion in the denouement and the plot is sordid in detail, although on the whole it is good enough of its type. Walter Oland is excellent as the Chinese philosopher-detective, and Harold Huber is especially good in the role of *Joubert,* excitable Chief of Police.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair — **Children, 8 to 12** Too complex

✪

A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS ◇ ◇

Fred Astaire, George Burns, Gracie Allen, Joan Fontaine, Reginald Gardiner, Ray Noble, Constance Collier, Montague Love, Jan Duggen. From a story by P. G. Wodehouse. Screen play by P. G. Wodehouse, Ernest Pagano and S. K. Lauren. Directed by George Stevens. Dance Director Hermes Pan. R. K. O.

Gracie Allen and George Burns share the spotlight with Fred Astaire in this latest musical offering of the star. They are exceedingly clever dancers, and the sequence where the three dance through the different concessions at the fair is the high light of the film. The story is negligible and a little slow. Burns in the role of publicity man for *Jerry* (Fred Astaire) has built him up as a great ladies' man. To avoid being mobbed, *Jerry* seeks seclusion and has a complicated affair with *Lady Alyce* (Joan Fontaine) who thinks she is in love with another American. The music by the late George Gershwin is tuneful, the sets elaborate, and the humor amusing, Gracie Allen having the best lines and deserving her popularity. Constance Collier and Montague Love are as usual outstanding, and Joan Fontaine is a lovely vis-a-vis for Fred Astaire. It is all gay and pleasantly entertaining.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining — **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

✪

DANGER PATROL ◇ ◇

Sally Eilers, John Beal, Harry Carey. Screen play by Bartlett. Direction by Lew Landers. R. K. O.

This is a melodramatic, exciting commentary on the dangerous vocation chosen by men who handle high explosives in the oil fields. It concerns the romance of a girl with one of the workers, her insistence that he get into something safer, and the final shocking accident which convinces him that high wages do not compensate for the risk and her unhappiness. It is well enough done technically although some of the sequences are too gruesome. Enjoyment is a matter of taste.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended — **Children, 8 to 12** Too emotional

✪

EXPENSIVE HUSBANDS ◇ ◇

Patric Knowles, Beverly Roberts, Allyn Joslyn, Gordon Oliver. Story by Kyrill de Shishmareff. Screen play by Lillie Hayward, Jean Negulosco and Jay Brennan. Direction by Bobby Connolly. Warner Bros.

Endless are the schemes and devices of publicity agents for their movie stars; the purchase of a foreign prince, title guaranteed, is all in the day's work. The intractability of the prince, who turns the situation to his own account, plays a variation on the theme of self-centered actors, and a number of jibes are made at the expense of Hollywood. The cast is adequate for a play which is lightly amusing, not to be taken seriously.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Waste of time — **Children, 8 to 12** Mature

✪

THE LAST GANGSTER ◇ ◇

Edward G. Robinson, James Stewart, Rose Strader, Lionel Stander, Douglas Scott, John Carradine. Original story by William A. Wellman and Robert Carson. Screen play by John Lee Mahin. Direction by Edward Ludwig. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

This drab, sinister story has little excuse for being. It is a theatrical and futile picture of life at its lowest ebb. A gangster is convicted of a tax evasion and sent to Alcatraz. His wife, hitherto ignorant of her husband's crimes, divorces him, marries a decent man, and attempts to bring up the gangster's son away from the influences of gangland. Ten years later the gangster, vowing vengeance upon the mother who has robbed him of his son, is released from prison. Miraculously the child softens his heart, and when he is finally shot by underworld enemies, he is clasping in his hand the boy's medal for "notable achievement" in school. Many sordid and brutal pictures are shown of life on the "Rock," and the whole film is a series of repulsive excerpts from the life of an unbalanced, egotistical killer. Though emphasizing the dire consequences of crime, a picture such as this cannot fail to harden the sensibilities of any onlooker who has the fortitude to sit through it.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Impossible — **Children, 8 to 12** Impossible

LOVE ON TOAST ◇ ◇

John Payne, Stella Ardler, Luis Alberni, Catherine (Sugar) Kane, Grant Richards. Screen play by Richard Connell, Jane Storm and Doris Malloy. Direction by E. A. Dupont. Paramount.

Luis Alberni is the one bright spot in this boring picture which begins with cake throwing and ends when everyone present is completely besmeared with marshmallow and custard. In between these sticky episodes runs a story about a girl press agent who undertakes to promote a publicity campaign to increase soup sales. She falls in love with the soda fountain clerk whom she has selected for the part of "Mr. Manhattan," and the affair culminates in a happy romantic bit as the two, crawling along the floor, bump into each other while pies whiz above their heads.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable

Children, 8 to 12 Passable

NAVY BLUE AND GOLD ◇ ◇

Robert Young, James Stewart, Florence Rice, Billie Burke, Lionel Barrymore, Tom Brown, Barnett Parker. From the book by George Bruce. Screen play by George Bruce. Direction by Sam Wood. M.-G.-M.

Here is an inspiring, heartening picture of one branch of public service. It combines the best traditions of the navy with the serious and humorous sides of life at the Academy, scenes of mild hazing, marching men and bands, exciting football games. While the story incidents are not unusual, the somewhat mechanical plotting is offset by a fine cast portraying interesting types with sincerity and conviction, and by good direction. The variety of interests in the picture should strike a responsive note in almost any theatre goer.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Good

NOTHING SACRED ◇ ◇

Carole Lombard, Fredric March, Charles Winninger, Walter Connolly. In technicolor. From the story by James H. Street. Screen play by Ben Hecht. Direction by William A. Wellman. Selznick International.

The cycle of rough and tumble comedies continues, and "Nothing Sacred" tops the list in a sequence where man and girl knock each other out in a vigorous battle. However the picture is exceedingly amusing. It is a clever satire from the pen of Ben Hecht on newspaper writers and publicity hounds who nose out pathetic characters and dramatize their ailments before a gaping public. According to Mr. Hecht, the unfortunate victims are often paraded before the multitudes at spectacular gatherings as theatrical and sometimes as macaber as the gladiatorial combats of old. In this story, a New York reporter is out of favor with his boss after a fiasco where a highly publicized personage has been proven a fake. He begs another chance, offering as a subject a girl who is dying of radium poison in a New England village. The idea may possibly offend the sensitive, but it is handled in a way which brings spontaneous laughter. The cast is excellent, and the director uses film technique so cleverly that the effect is hilariously funny. It is not a long picture, but the ending is somewhat of a letdown, for the pace is difficult to sustain at the high speed of the first reels. Technicolor is an advantage in adding to the fantasy, and the shots of the New York skyline as seen from an airplane are strikingly beautiful. The picture is sophisticated fare, clever in its burlesque, witty in its lines and challenging in its satire.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Sophisticated

Children, 8 to 12 No; quite beyond them

PORTIA ON TRIAL ◇ ◇

Walter Abel, Frieda Inescort, Neil Hamilton, Heather Angel, Ruth Donnelly, Barbara Pepper, Clarence Kolb. Screen play by Samuel Ornitz, based on an original story by Faith Baldwin. Direction by George Nichols, Jr. Republic.

Authoress Faith Baldwin, specialist in plumbing the depths of feminine emotions, wrote the story from which this film play was made. Her heroine, *Portia Manners,* is a brilliant and tricky woman lawyer whose past wrongs prompt her to champion the cause of women and girls who have stooped to folly. In her defense of a girl who is on trial for murdering an unfaithful lover, *Portia* divulges her own life story and wrings a sympathetic verdict from the jury. For audiences who like this sort of entertainment, the compelling personality of Miss Inescort makes the stock situations and melodramatic story both touching and real. Even the ancient controversy over the double standard seems almost new when the lovely *Portia* pleads her case.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Ethically bad and too sophisticated

Children, 8 to 12 Certainly not

SECOND HONEYMOON ◇ ◇

Tyrone Power, Loretta Young, Stuart Erwin, Claire Trevor, Marjorie Weaver, Lyle Talbot. Based on the story by Philip Wylie in the "Red Book." Screen play by Katherine Scola and Darrell Ware. Direction by Walter Lang. 20th Century-Fox.

"Second Honeymoon" presents the romantic encounters of two young people, simply brimming over with personality and the joy of living, who have no more responsibility towards the tenets of church and state than daisies nodding in the wind. They marry, unmarry and meet again to the confusion of *Vicky's* second husband. It is indubitably en-

tertaining. Loretta Young and Tyrone Power have never been more attractive; costumes and settings are brushed with the gloss of luxury; dialogue is unusually well written, and the characterizations by Stuart Erwin and Marjorie Weaver combine comedy with a wistful sincerity. Miss Weaver shows real promise for the future in her part of *Joy*. Most of the play is in good taste with the emphasis on enduring love, but the final scene, when hero and heroine fly off together without benefit of divorce, is an unnecessary fillip at society.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Wrong attitude toward life

Children, 8 to 12 No interest

THE SHADOW ◇ ◇

Charles Quigley, Rita Hayworth, Donald Kirk, Dwight Frye, Marc Lawrence. Direction by C. C. Coleman, Jr. Columbia.

No more utterly absurd melodrama could be imagined than this wild tale of murder by poison darts. It is the story of a circus troop. The vile villain is a suave person who wears tights and does amazing stunts on a horse. Various of his fellow performers would like to see him break his neck, but when he falls dead from the back of his horse, the local sheriff has to find out why. While a hooded figure sneaks among the circus wagons throwing knives and venomous darts, the audience hisses, but when the real murderer is discovered it is a matter of no importance to anyone.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 Impossible

SOME BLONDES ARE DANGEROUS ◇ ◇

Noah Berry, Jr., William Gargan, Dorothea Kent, Nan Grey. Based on a story by William R. Burnett. Screen play by Lester Cole. Direction by Milton Carruth. Universal.

This film is a trite story of the prize ring, and tells of a fighter who resists the temptation to take "dirty" money for losing a fight. The incredibly stupid young man falls into the clutches of a designing actress, and the tale goes on to an obvious ending when the other girl wins the hero. There are many scenes of action in the ring, which may appeal to some. The best efforts of the cast fail to produce anything better than harmless trash.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

SUBMARINE D-1 ◇ ◇

Pat O'Brien, George Brent, Wayne Morris, Frank McHugh, Doris Weston. Screen play by Frank Wead, Warren Duff and Lawrence Kimbal. Original story by Frank Wead. Direction by Lloyd Bacon. Warner Brothers.

Here is a dramatic story of the pride and heartbreak which go to make up the successful launching of the submarine fleet in the U. S. Navy. The plot is inconsequential and rightly so. Interest centers in the construction of a submarine and the ingenious devices with which it is equipped to preserve the lives of its crew. One has the feeling of listening to a fascinating lecture, illustrated with pictures, on recent developments in the Navy's craft. The romance is introduced so unobtrusively that it does not interrupt. *Ann Sawyer's* fiance, *Tom Callam,* dies in a submarine disaster three days before their wedding, and *Butch Rogers* and his friend *Sock McGillis,* who are both in love with her, try to console her. They are on the crew of the submarine D-1, which is making its maiden voyage from the Atlantic Coast through the Panama Canal to San Diego. On the West Coast, the submarine engages in war manoeuvres in collaboration with other submarines and the fleet of battle ships, solves its war problem and comes through with flying colors, only to be rammed by a destroyer and sunk. All the scientific procedure of the crew coming to the surface by means of artificial lungs and the use of a new device called the "rescue tank," which brings up injured members of the crew to safety, are shown in intricate detail. Settings of course are confined almost solely to the ship. Closely knit, suitably dramatic, and highly educational, this picture is absorbing entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Too tense

THANK YOU, MR. MOTO ◇ ◇

Peter Lorre, Thomas Beck, Pauline Frederick, Jayne Regan, Sidney Blackmer, Sig Rumann, John Carradine. Screen play by Willis Cooper and Norman Foster. Based on a story by J. P. Marquand. Direction by Norman Foster. 20th Century-Fox.

Mr. Moto's flair for detective work involves him in a perilous adventure pertaining to a series of scroll paintings of the days of Genghis Kahn. He tries to protect the owners, two high born Chinese, and failing in this, becomes a powerful instrument of vengeance. The scenes have a strong flavor of the Orient, particularly those of street life in Peiping. Characterizations by Peter Lorre and Pauline Frederick are interesting, and the direction is excellent for a mystery film. The chief fault of the picture lies in a surfeit of murders, several of which are committed with relish and dispatch by *Mr. Moto* himself. Not only is it against the best usage for the hero to engage in homicide, but when there is so much violence it loses all significance, and one sets aside the whole affair as an impossible yarn.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

THOROUGHBREDS DON'T CRY ◇ ◇

Judy Garland, Mickey Rooney, Sophie Tucker, C. Aubrey Smith, Ronald Sinclair, Forrester Harvey, Charles H. Brown, Frankie Darro, Henry Kolker. Original story by Eleanore Griffin and J. Walter Ruben. Screen play by Lawrence Hazard. Direction by Alfred E. Green. M.-G.-M.

Two boys are the central characters in this race track melodrama, and it is through their personalities that interest is built up and sustained. Mickey Rooney as *Timmie Donovan* and Roger Calverton as *Ronald Sinclair* are respectively a swaggering American jockey and a well bred young English boy, grandson of *Sir Peter Dalverton* who owns the famous race horse which *Timmie* is scheduled to ride. The boys become great friends, and when *Timmie* is persuaded that the only way to provide a necessary iron lung for his father is to throw the race, he must make an almost impossible choice between two evils. The plot is melodramatic and rather far fetched, but the skillful young actors more than make up for story deficiencies. The picture is good though not exceptional.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Yes

Children, 8 to 12
Passable if not too exciting

⊗

VICTORIA THE GREAT ◇ ◇

Anna Neagle, Anton Walbrook, H. B. Warner, Walter Rilla. Direction by Herbert Wilcox. London Films.

Somewhat as an answer to "Victoria Regina," which indulged in no little scandal mongering and unkind commentary, comes this production of London Films, recalling Victoria as the great and beloved queen of the British people. That is not to say that the Victoria of Anna Neagle is a bloodless figure without human faults, for as a young woman soon after her accession, she is self-willed and stoops to pettiness in her relations with those close to her, particularly her husband, the young Prince Consort. It is interesting to observe that in this drama, as in the other, the German-born Albert, who for many years was unpopular in England, is given full due for his fine grasp of political affairs and his unflagging efforts for the good of the realm. Anton Walbrook is splendid in the part, and the love affair is done in a delicately prim manner, the epitome of what we call Victorian. His death is deeply touching. The queen changes from the beautiful, fresh young girl to the energetic woman and at length to the calm, benign old woman, mother of all her people, whose blessing on her subjects will bring a catch in the throat of many a Briton. The last scenes of her Diamond Jubilee are resplendent in Technicolor. Lesser personages of her reign, particularly the long succession of prime ministers, are well cast. Musical accompaniments are by the Royal Band and the London Symphony. Doubtless other historical films have contained greater conflict of purposes, higher dramatic values, but none other has been presented with the authenticity found here. It is based on the diary kept by Queen Victoria, often the same dialogue being used. The views of Buckingham Palace, Windsor, Kensington are actual. Many costumes, of which Anna Neagle wears some forty odd, are replicas of those preserved in the British Museum. The train which carries the royal pair on their wedding journey is not a copy but the very train they used; so too the coach is the one which bore Victoria through the streets of London at her Jubilee. It is a beautiful picture, which should be seen by all who are interested in historical detail, and the pageantry of another day.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Splendid

Children, 8 to 12
Educational, but rather long and too little action

SHORT SUBJECTS

PLUTO'S QUINTUPLETS ◇ ◇

Walt Disney-R. K. O. Radio.

Pluto has mis-adventures when he is left to care for his five puppies, while Mother follows the butcher boy. Wild confusion results. Pluto unfortunately imbibes too freely, although accidentally. It is amusing.

HAWAIIAN HOLIDAY ◇ ◇

Walt Disney-R. K. O. Radio.

Mickey, Minnie, and Donald Duck in Hawaiian skirts dancing the hula are a sight to see, but Goofy on a surf board is even more fun. Lovely color and rhythm.

DONALD'S OSTRICH ◇ ◇

Walt Disney-R. K. O. Radio.

Donald Duck as a station master gets into difficulties when an ostrich is left in his care. The bird eats everything in sight—alarm clocks, balloons and all—and wrecks the station. Donald Duck is beligerent as usual. Will appeal most to younger audiences.

CLOCK CLEANERS, THE ◇ ◇

Walt Disney-R. K. O. Radio.

Mickey and his friends offer to clean the the town clock and get mixed up with the figures which strike the hour. It has great originality in theme and treatment.

LONESOME GHOSTS ◇ ◇

Walt Disney-R. K. O. Radio.

Mickey and his friends offer to clean the ghosts out of a haunted house. They are terrified, until quite accidentally they terrify the ghosts. Rather scary for tiny tots.

OLD MILL, THE ◇ ◇

Walt Disney-R. K. O. Radio.

A beautiful pastoral—Evening comes with sunset, and, as the sounds and activities of day subside, the night birds, insects, and bats begin to wake. Then comes a storm of fierce intensity, which almost destroys the old mill. It finally wears out its fury, and dawn comes peacefully again, the night creatures return to rest, day begins. The musical accompaniment is perfect and the color lovely. Photography has the new third dimension effect, which enhances the beauty of the picture. There is but one defect—a scene where the turning windmill threatens destruction to a bird's nest. It brings tense, jarring moments in an otherwise exquisite film.

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